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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

PRESIDENT Arroyo will lead the ceremonies today at the Subic-Clark Tarlac Expressway. The four-lane highway will shorten travel time between Subic and Clark to about 30 minutes. (See story below.)

Stocks fall; dollar sinks

'Dry run' for Subic to Clark highway

By Tonnie Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon
and Ross T. DeVera
and Ramon F. Domingo
in Manila

AN EXPERIMENT THAT WOULD shorten travel time between Subic and Clark to about 30 minutes and cook chefs' pasta could allow it was launched by customs, may will be open to motorists...for free...in a crackling tourism-starting notice.

Built at a cost of P68.5 billion, the four-lane Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEx) is the country's longest toll road.

President Macapagal-Arroyo will lead in the "ribbon-cutting" at the project at 10 a.m. today.

The entire expressway spans 94 kilometers.

The dry run will last until March 24 and will involve only the Subic-to-Clark portion spanning 16 km., officials of the Bases Conversion and Develop-

(SEE PAGE B8)

World market turmoil pushes oil near $112

HOT A GOOD day as the buyers. A trader at the Philippine Stock Exchange in Makati City says his hand is his hand as Philippine shares plummeted on Monday to their lowest level in more than a year. ALVIN

P202-M lotto pot up for grabs

By Jeannette I. Andrade

THE NEXT WEEK THIS YEAR could be a lot different from previous Holy Weeks in the Philippines—for some 15 lotto...at least.

For this is the week they may well bombard heaven with more than the usual volley of prayers.

With still no winner in the 6/49 lotto draw after the prize skyrocketed to P184.7 million on Sunday, officials at the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) said they were probably approaching a historic record-breaking pot.

PCSO spokesperson Jo Larry Cedro said the prize for the next draw on March 27 (a Thursday) could go beyond the P202 mil-

(SEE PAGE A6)

LONDON—GLOBAL STOCKS PLUNGED AND THE US dollar tumbled on Monday as world markets were gripped with fear that the credit crisis which sank US investment bank Bear Stearns would claim more casualties.

An emergency cut by the US Federal Reserve in its discount rate and a weekend deal for JP Morgan Chase to buy Bear Stearns at a fire-sale price heightened the sense of crisis surrounding through financial markets across the globe.

The dollar fell to as low as ¥ 97.72 yen—its lowest since mid-1995...dragged down by a gloomy outlook for the American economy and prospects for lower interest rates. The euro rose to a record high $1.5903.

The volatility spilled over to commodities, with oil soaring to fresh highs above $111 a barrel and gold jumping to new heights beyond $1,032 per ounce as investors sought a safe haven from the storm.

In Asia, Tokyo stocks plunged by more than 4 percent at one point before recovering some ground to close 3.7 percent lower, ending below the key 11,000 points level for the first time since August 2005.

Hong Kong shed 3.2 percent, Shanghai declined 3.6 percent, Seoul gave up 1.6 percent and Sydney was off 2.5 percent. Other stock indexes were closed in the Asia-Pacific region, including markets in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. India's Sensex dropped 5.1 percent in afternoon trading.

"The panic selling was caused by fear, individual investors, although some institutions also joined the selling spree," said Peter Lai, a director at ING Vickers trading firm.

In European morning trade, Frankfurt was the worst affected among the main markets, plunging 3.66 percent, London lost 2.11 percent and Paris sank

(SEE PAGE A6)

Lozada runs into trouble with Catholic prelates

By Beverly T. Natividad
in Manila
and Jhunnex Napallacan
in Cebu

ETAS MYSTICS RODOLFO Lozada Jr. has run into problems with Roman Catholic prelates who refuse to turn their pulpits into political forums against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Bishop Leonardo Legaspi of Naval Caceres yesterday said he had ordered priests in his Camarines Sur diocese to refrain from celebrating Mass with Lozada, who has mounted a crusade against corruption following his exposés on the anomalous $329-million broadband project.

"I told our priests that they should not allow the Mass to be

(CEBU PAGE A10)

Fast-food outlets told to cut rice serving

AS THE CONFUSE FACES A looming rice shortage, the Department of agriculture wants fast-food outlets to offer half portions of rice to encourage its [illegible] in cut less of the staple.

"I'm asking fast-food restaurants to give their customers an option to order half a cup of rice because right now if you do a survey of all the fast-food joints you will notice a fraction of them always have excess rice," Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap said yesterday.

Yap noted that people "don't really finish their rice."

But fast-food restaurants are popular meeting points for families and office workers in the Philippines and Jollibee Foods Corp., the country's biggest fast-food chain, as well as international chain McDonald's and KFC serve rice with their burgers and deep-fried chicken.

The Philippines is struggling to secure supplies of up to 1.8 million tons this year amid the tight global supply and surging prices.

(SEE PAGE A10)

GMA appoints Brion 15th justice of Supreme Court

By Lala B. Salaverria

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-AR-ROYO, filling a vacancy in the Supreme Court as it debated whether executive privilege may be invoked to cover up an alleged crime, yesterday appointed Labor Secretary Brion to an associate justice.

Viewing he would honor his oath of office and remain independent, Brion was sworn in by Chief Justice Reynato Puno before noon.

Just hours earlier, Undersecretary Edwin Lacierda told Brion of his appointment and directed him to report to the Supreme Court.

As early as Sunday, Brion said he had been told by Malacañang to "expect something."

(SEE A4)

BRION: Expect something

'Pasyon' to go hi-tech videoke style, says doc

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
inquirer Southern Luzon

LUCENA CITY—THE SOLEMN PASSION tradition of reading the "Pasyon" during Holy Week may soon become technologically friendly—videoke-style.

Instead of reading about the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus

(SEE PAGE A13)

US think tank warns RP on peril of Spratlys study

By Veh Contreras

AN AMERICAN THINK TANK HAS URGED Washington to treat with "serious concern" the corruption scandal over the aborted National Broadband Network (NBN) deal with China's ZTE Corp. as well as suspicions linking the flow of Chinese loans to Manila to a 2004 accord that allows Beijing to scan the disputed Spratlys island chain for fuel deposits.

(SEE PAGE A12)

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

EZ2 FOUR DIGIT
27 24 — 2 3 6 1
SUPERTWO
4 6 5 1 2 6
MEGALOTTO 6/45
16 19 29 34 36 45
P35,043,229.80

Senate goes slow on Spratlys probe

Question of which committee should look into deal with China sent to rules panel

WHAT'S INSIDE

- **LAPUS: DEPED** procurement program cited by World Bank /A5
- **SICK SUMILAO** tillers vow to keep up march around Palace /A7
- **RIGHTS GROUPS** seek end of dolphin show /A7

By Dona Pazolingan

FOR DIPLOMATIC AND SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS, the Senate has decided to go slow on its proposed inquiry into the Joint Marine Seismic Undertaking (JMSU) among the Philippines, China and Vietnam in the contested Spratly Islands in the South China Sea.

Senators yesterday agreed among themselves to refer the various proposals to investigate the seismic exploration deal to the Senate committee on rules, which would decide which committee should conduct the investigation.

Senate President Manuel Villar said the Spratlys resolutions were referred to the rules committee first "so there will be no wrestling."

The rules committee handles questions on the Senate's internal rules. Chaired by the Senate majority leader, Sen. Vicente Sotto III, it will discuss whether the JMSU inquiry would be assigned to the blue ribbon committee under Sen. Rodolfo Biazon or the foreign relations committee under Sen. Miriam Santiago.

Four measures have filed resolutions related to the joint survey for potential oil and gas resources in areas claimed entirely or in part by the Philippines, China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan.

The resolutions by opposition Senators Antonio Trillanes IV, who is under detention and facing court-martial for allegedly plotting a coup, Pimentel, Santiago and Lacson-Madrigal call for an investigation of the acts of administration Senator Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's visit to Beijing when the first Philippine-China JMSU agreement was signed on Sept. 1, 2004. Six months later, Vietnam joined the undertaking.

"I was only told the had to do with keeping us debar the situation in the Spratlys so that lived no might pollution (we don't have a drooling sore)," said Pimentel, who stressed he did not oppose the signing.

Pimentel said he ported President Macapagal-Arroyo's visit to Beijing when the first Philippine-China JMSU agreement was signed on Sept. 1, 2004. Six months later, Vietnam joined the undertaking.

"I was only told the had to do with keeping us debar the situation in the Spratlys so that lived no might pollution (we don't have a drooling sore)," said Pimentel, who stressed he did not oppose the signing.

Commission itself, you will find out that the country resources was in an instrument (to resolve conflict)," he said.

"We should fully explore alternatives before we even think about it [war]. But if it will come down to hand-to-hand combat, then why not?" Enrico said.

He made the statement after noting that against China, one of the countries claiming the Spratlys, "we may not have the chance." But, he added, "that does not mean our soldiers are not willing to fight for our country." Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

'We can go to war but..'

BAGUIO CITY—ARMED Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said yesterday government forces were ready to defend the country's claims to the contested Spratly Islands, adding that Filipino soldiers would even be counted on to engage in hand-to-hand combat to protect the Philippines territory.

But Esperon told reporters here that the AFP did not use the word to you up a defense perimeter around the Spratlys.

"If you ask us if we are willing to go to war, we are. But in the

Handog ni Pangulong Gloria Libreng Biyahe sa SCTEx
(Subic-Clark Segment)

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TRIAL RUN
March 16, 1:00pm - 5:30pm
March 19-24, 5:30am - 5:30pm

ADVISORY
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• From NLEX bound for Subic, take the SpurNLE interchange located between the Dau and Sta. Ines Exits of the NLEX and proceed to the SCTEx Clark Logistics Toll Plaza, after which turn left to Subic.
• From SCTEx bound for Bataan, exit at Dinalupihan Interchange via Roman Hi-way.
• From Subic and Bataan bound for Manila, enter the SCTEx through the Tipo Toll Plaza or the Dinalupihan Toll Plaza, respectively, and follow the road signage towards the Clark Logistics Toll Plaza. Upon reaching the Clark Logistics Interchange turn right at first ramp that will lead to the Clark Logistics Toll Plaza, then the SpurNLE interchange connecting to NLEx .

Vehicles allowed are: Type 1 vehicles; tourist & chartered buses; and motorcycles 400cc and above.

Nearest stops for rest areas are along NLEX and inside Subic.

SCTEx Hotline:
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(02) 362-9997
(02) 362-2246

BCDA
www.bcda.gov.ph

Ermita: I have no part in RP property case in Tokyo

By Christine O. Avendaño

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY Eduardo Ermita yesterday denied having a hand in the awarding of a controversial contract for the development of a 2,000-sq m property owned by the Philippine government in the Nampeidai district of Tokyo, Japan.

Ermita said he did not know why he and Deputy Executive Secretary Manuel Gaite were being dragged into the case—a court battle between the owners of Nagaoka Tatsu Construction, the winning bidder, and a former agent of the company who claimed to have an "irrevocable power of attorney" to negotiate the construction project.

The property was part of Japan's war reparations for the damages it inflicted on the Philippines during World War II. The Philippine Embassy vacated the four-story building that sits on the property when it transferred to the more upscale Roppongi district.

Gaite was the Malacañang representative on the bids and awards committee (BAC) for the Nampeidai property. Ermita names Undersecretary Hernani Abadesco as the BAC chair.

Ermita speculated that because "Gaite is my deputy executive secretary so they [the political opposition] are scandalizing this with me," he said.

"It's an internal fight between the principal [Mendoza Na-guiat] and [he can be] given a special power of attorney to [Eduardo] Tandoyan. It has nothing to do with BAC anymore," Ermita said.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. yesterday questioned the "unusual interest" of Ermita in the contract. Gaite, Pimentel said, "does not have the authority to act on behalf of the government."

Ermita said he had been told by Gaite that Tandoyan had won his case in a Japanese court.

On Dec. 5, 2007, Ermita was said to have issued a memorandum noting Nagayama and Tanabiya's inability to secure title and giving the green light to the project according to a BAC board resolution that called for a supplemental agreement to transfer the contract to Tandoyan.

'Pork' not a bad thing, say solons in pamphlet

By TJ Burgonio and Norman Bordadora

IS CONGRESS' VERSION OF THE "PORK barrel" as rich and sinful as its American counterpart?

Not at all, according to a booklet released by congressmen.

The push-button taxpayer money—usually in the millions—allotted to each representative and senator to fund their pet projects.

The House of Representatives has issued a pamphlet to try and correct the public misconception that lawmakers skim off and pocket a huge portion of the congressional fund.

The authors, Speaker Prospero Nograles and Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman, said allocation of the pork barrel, now called the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF), is governed by stringent procurement, bidding and audit rules.

In the long run, the PDAF finances "small bridges, school buildings," say a short stretch of a road in a remote barangay otherwise not funded by national agencies, they said.

"It is not, by any measure, akin to the so-called 'pork barrel' of the original American model," the authors said in the pamphlet "Understanding the Pork Barrel."

Required reading

Some 500 copies of the pamphlet have been printed for distribution to congressmen and the media. Some 5,000 more will be produced for NGOs, business organizations and schools, according to a legislative staff member.

"Understanding the PDAF is appreciating its necessity and impact," Nograles and Lagman said.

If Nograles had his way, the booklet would be required reading in the country's high schools.

The speaker has asked the Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education to make the pamphlet required reading in high schools and colleges, and explained his colleagues to explain the PDAF in their constituencies.

In a new message to the business, Nograles said it was time the youth were taught the benefits of the pork barrel rather than have the decades-old perception persist that the fund was just a source of millions of pesos in kickbacks for lawmakers.

Former Senate President Franklin Drilon (D, Antique) raised a howl over the P13.3-billion pork barrel insertion in the House version of the 2008 national budget, and dared Malacañang and the lower chamber to restore the pork barrel. House leaders rejected this.

President Macapagal-Arroyo last week signed into law the P1.327 trillion national budget, which included the PDAF.

Allotments

In the General Appropriations Act, enacted by the House on the Senate's prior to it signing into law, the financial assistance to local government units and PDAF was pegged at P5.232 billion.

Every year, a measure is allotted P200 million and a congressman, P70 million.

Nograles and Lagman, chair of the committee on appropriations, said that contrary to perception, the PDAF (and its predecessor Countryside Development Fund or CDF) was not a cash allocation given to lawmakers.

"This is a gross misconception because members of Congress neither handle the funds nor implement the projects," they said.

Antipolo Rep. Salvador Escudero welcomed the release of the pamphlet, and agreed with its authors that the pork barrel in the Philippines was vastly different from that in the United States.

Given to parties in US

"In the US, the pork barrel is given to parties, and they don't care how it's spent. That's not the case here. If you want a road built, it's the Department of Public Works and Highways that will undertake the project," he said in an interview.

"If there's no funky-punky there, no one will beat the incumbent senator or congressman in the next elections," he added.

Nograles and Lagman also pointed out that the Supreme Court ruled in 1994 that the CDF form/nature of the PDAF was a valid and constitutional exercise of Congress' "power of the purse."

Besides, they added, the Commission on Audit has not linked any lawmaker to the abuse, misuse or any infraction in the allocation of the congressional fund.

Aguinaldo rites set

THE 130TH BIRTH anniversary of Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo will be commemorated by the National Historical Institute on March 22 at the Emilio Aguinaldo Shrine in Kawit, Cavite.

Aguinaldo's wife bore to Crispulo Aguinaldo and Trinidad Famy in Cavite. If Vicki, Kawit's old name.

Simple rites and activities will be held in his honor. The flag-raising will be led by Kawit Mayor Reynaldo S. Aguinaldo and Ing. Joseph Aguinaldo A. Abaya, both direct descendants of Aguinaldo, the president of the First Philippine Republic.

Aguinaldo also held several positions in his hometown, among them "cabeza de barangay" and then as the first municipal mayor later converted into the Gobernadorcillo. He headed the secret society Magdalo before, leading his forces to victory in Kawit, Imus and Binakayan, and establishing his reputation as a military leader.

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A Country for Sale

RP seas, lands and skies on the auction block?

Maraming nagugutom sa Pilipinas. Maraming walang lupang sinasaka. Maraming walang trabaho. Maraming naghihirap, isa sa bawat tatlong Pilipino sang ayon sa gobyerno mismo. Ang pangunahing dahilan sa paghihirap ay ang patuloy na pagguho ng industriya at agrikultura sa ilalim ng isang one-sided economic liberalization (lower tariffs, unchecked smuggling, missing safety nets, poor application of safeguard measures, trade-industry policy incoherence, high cost of doing business, etc.). Tanging remittances ng 10 milyong overseas Filipinos (contract workers at immigrants) ang bumubuhay sa bansa.

And yet, the behavior of some policy makers is bizarre. Instead of addressing the land, hunger, food insecurity, joblessness and poverty affecting the majority of Filipinos, they are proferring a strange solution—recklessly and lazily share our seas, our lands, our resources and our skies with the foreign powers. Spratlys deal and JPEPA for our seas, RP-China agri deals for our lands, liberal resource exploitation policy for our minerals and open-skies policy in Clark and Subic for our skies.

All this being justified based on the flimsy excuse that these foreign powers will bring in investments, technology and jobs for our people. This is nothing but a revival of old colonialism, this time initiated by the local 'commissioners' and foreign 'brokers' and embellished with neo-liberal balderdash on 'economic openness'. Have we forgotten the long chain of people's resistance against the encomiendas-haciendas, plantation agriculture and extractive-based development? ***Is the Philippines for sale?***

On our seas, why dilute our claim on the Spratlys, a huge area which is within our continental shelf, by sharing its development (in the name of seismic and mineral mapping) with China, which is 1,000 nautical miles away from this island group? Why bow to the pressures of China to assert our right to define our territorial seas and include these islets in our 200-mile exclusive economic zone as stipulated by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)?

On our seas and our lands, why are some members of the Senate turning blind on the unconstitutionality of the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA), which requires the Philippines to open up land ownership to foreigners and allows the free movement of Japanese 'factory ships' in our waters even while Japan is able to retain all their restrictive laws against foreign encroachment on Japanese waters?

Still on lands, why the 19 RP-China agricultural deals (signed January 2007) committing the government to identify and consolidate over 1.2 million hectares of Philippine lands which Chinese investors can develop to grow food, fruit, flower, vegetable and bio-fuel crops for China, with the Chinese investors themselves providing the technology, direct management and marketing facilitation? Because of the opposition registered by various farmers' organizations and agrarian reform advocates among the bishops, Secretary Art Yap suspended in September 2007 the 1.2 million-hectare deals. But how come some local government units and special government agencies are still trying to identify and consolidate thousands of hectares of land which the Chinese investors can take over?

On mineral and oil resources, what is the pricing policy for the oil and minerals extracted in the Philippines by foreign exploration companies? Why, for instance, is the government royalty on the Malampaya oil only less than 10 per cent?

And now on Philippine skies, why has the Philippines, starting in 2006, unilaterally given foreign air carriers free access to Clark air base even if their home countries have not given similar access to our own Filipino carriers? And now pending in Malacanang is a draft Executive Order widening further this unilateral access by including Subic in this open-skies arrangement and by allowing foreign air carriers unlimited frequency and capacity of flights, including availment of non-cabotage rights. And yet, no similar reciprocal rights are being extended to Philippine air carriers by the home countries of these foreign air carriers. In other words, while the restrictions or limitations under existing Air Services Agreements are waived by Malacanang in favor of foreign air carriers, the same restrictions or limitations will continue to be imposed on Filipino air carriers by foreign states! Thus, air carriers from Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore and Malaysia have been given unlimited and unrestricted access to Clark and will be given additional and permanent privileges under the draft EO, and yet our own carriers such as Cebu Pacific and PAL have been denied reciprocal rights in these countries! Obviously, foreign air carriers are not only placed on equal footing as Philippine carriers but will in fact be placed in a better position than Philippine air carriers.

We, at the Fair Trade Alliance, say NO to all these anti-Filipino and unfair trade and economic policies. We call on the government to:

- **Recall the Joint Seismic Monitoring agreement with China and Vietnam on the Spratlys,**
- **Pass immediately the law delineating our territorial seas under UNCLOS,**
- **Renegotiate the JPEPA,**
- **Suspend – permanently – the RP-China deals on the 1.2 million hectares,**
- **Recognize the gravity of the food crisis and the need for emergency 'food for the poor' measures,**
- **Reversal of policy of agriculture import dependence,**
- **Early passage of CARP with reforms,**
- **Renegotiate the Malampaya royalty sharing,**
- **Disclose to the public the details of the various oil and mining projects involving foreign interests,**
- **Recall Executive Order 500 and Executive Order 500 A and scrap the issuance of the draft Executive Order 500 B, and**
- **Open our skies based on fair, equal and reciprocal airspace arrangements.**

Save our seas, lands, resources and skies against foreign marauders and their local brokers!
Sama-sama nating isulong ang maunlad na Pilipinas sa ilalim ng patas at makatarungang kalakalan!

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Lapus: DepEd procurement program cited by World Bank

By Jerry E. Esplanada

DISPUTING CHARGES OF RIGGED biddings and malfeasance pour counselor, Education Secretary Jesli Lapus said yesterday the Department of Education's Textbook Procurement Program had been served by the World Bank as a "model" and "best practice example" in Southeast Asia.

The DepEd's textbook reforms "have just been commended by the World Bank as an outstanding achievement," said Lapus in a statement in response to a recent call by fiscalist City Rep. Marcos Paredes for an investigation into continuing irregularities in textbook procurement.

Lapus said, "The improvements made so far in the system, such as the segregation of contract from printing, actually resulted in hundreds of millions of pesos in savings while raising content and paper quality."

'I will not allow that'

Paredes (Lakas-CMD), in a privilege speech last week, charged DepEd with favoring Vibal Publishing House and its joint venture partners for most, if not all, textbooks and teachers' manuals.

Lapus, who joined the DepEd in July 2006, asked any disgruntled textbook suppliers to come out and lodge formal complaints.

"They have to come up with proof that some suppliers are getting special treatment. Guess like DepEd, I will not allow that," Lapus had said in an earlier interview.

More reforms

Lapus said the DepEd "will continue pursuing reforms in its textbook procurement system."

Lapus said the impact of these reforms is seen in the declining cost of textbooks procured by the department.

The DepEd's State of Basic Education Report, signed by Lapus, said average textbook costs have declined "from P74 and P128 in 2006, to P37 and P59."

In the report, Lapus said the DepEd had also been "clearing the past" on the problems of dilapidated and overcrowded classrooms, overworked teachers and limited resources for learning, like textbooks, science equipment, computers and guides for teachers.

Lapus said 2007 "witnessed the deliberate attempts by the DepEd to effect changes in policy, systems and processes crucial to the functioning of the basic education system."

Distribution problems

Lapus acknowledged in the report that although the ideal book-to-pupil ratio had been attained several years ago, the problem was that the children did not receive the books on time. He said the DepEd was addressing this "distribution problem."

Further, the DepEd blamed local government units for the agency's failure to distribute P329 million worth of textbooks, information and communication technology packages, computers and instructional materials to public schools.

Lapus conceded that the minimum maintenance and lack of coordination may have been due to policy changes at the DepEd. There was "duplication in procurements. Thus, many books ended up in storage rooms of schools and division offices," he said.

Stocks fall; dollar sinks

From page A1

2.61 percent. Madrid was off 2.11 percent and Zurich fell 2.01 percent.

US stocks also slid at the open on Monday amid fears that the global credit crisis is spiraling out of control.

The Dow Jones industrial average fell 177.33 points, or 1.48 percent, to 11,773.86. The Standard & Poor's 500 Index slid 20.76 points, or 1.61 percent, to 1,267.26. The Nasdaq Composite Index tumbled 43.76 points, or 2.07 percent, to 2,148.73.

Very jittery market

"Panic isn't necessarily a direct US-UK translation in terms of Dow futures, but it does underline what was already a very jittery market, particularly in the banking sector," Hargreaves Lansdown analyst Richard Hunter said.

"People are coming out of equities and going into the safe haven of something like gold and the weakness of the dollar underpinning oil that is pushing the oil prices to near record levels," he added.

As the greenback's tumble and the decline in stock markets prompted investors to seek shelter in commodities, oil prices hit an all-time trading high in Asia. Light, sweet crude for April delivery spiked to a record $111.80 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

Further slides in Asian markets are likely according to Samad Uraa, the governor of the Philippine Association of Securities Brokers and Dealers Inc.

"The outlook is very grim," Uraa said.

Severe funding crisis

Global stocks have spiraled lower ever since it emerged late Friday that Bear Stearns—the fifth largest US investment bank—was facing a severe funding crisis.

JPMorgan Chase announced late Sunday it would acquire Bear Stearns for $2 a share, valuing the company at about $236 million, just a fraction of what the company was worth earlier.

Bear Stearns, which was among the hardest hit by the collapse of the US subprime mortgage market or high-risk home loan sector, had a stock market value of $3.54 billion before the bad news broke on Friday.

Persistent credit uncertainty

While the buyout was aimed at averting a bankruptcy and a spreading of the crisis of confidence in the global financial system, the collapse of one of the world's most venerable investment banks stunned investors.

"There is persistent credit uncertainty. Market players have been requested by list shows which shows the subprime mortgage problems are so deep-rooted," said Atsuji Ohata, global strategist of Shinko Securities in Tokyo.

"Bear buying an investment bank does not solve the problem," Ohata said. "Markets are pondering [the US government] to inject public funds."

Wall Street's Dow Jones Industrial Average index fell 1.6 percent to close at 11,951.89 points on Friday following news of the bailout of Bear Stearns.

"Where you have financial institutions like Bear Stearns needing to be bailed out, people start questioning everything," said Andrew Sebastyn, head of Amsterdam equities at Investment.

Other bear-running investments is that other banks may also be expected nursing a cash crunch, dealers said.

"The US markets will continue to be hostage to truth developments ordered to the corporate loan and credit crisis," Metrobank Research Institute analyst Raji Tuberoth said.

More rumors

Aside from the Bear Stearns woes, markets were also pressured by rumors that US investment bank Lehman Brothers is having similar financial problems.

"We are worried about what comes next," Metro Investment, a managing at Metro Securities in Manila, said of concerns that other banks may collapse.

Shim said investors were on guard ahead of the release of quarterly earnings reports from big US investment banks this week, including Goldman Brothers, Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley.

Bear Stearns had been scheduled to report its results Monday, though it wasn't clear if it would go ahead with that plan.

Record lows for dollar

The cost came as the dollar slumped to a fresh record low against the euro and a 12-year trough against the yen as traders braced for a hefty cut in the Fed's main interest rate on Tuesday.

Japanese officials quickly rallied for calm in the currency markets, but did not announce any plans for intervention to stem up the greenback by buying up dollars. The week ended modest profits as the country's key exporters.

In an oral interview early next week, the Federal Reserve took bold action Monday evening by cutting the discount rate, its lending rate to financial institutions, to 0.25 percent from 3.5 percent, effective immediately.

The Fed also created another lending facility for big investment banks to accept their assets that would be available to big Wall Street firms on Monday.

The Fed was also widely expected to again cut its benchmark interest rate, the Fed funds rate, by as much as a half percentage point to 2.5 percent at a regular meeting on for Tuesday.

"So far the measures by the Federal Reserve, both independently and in coordination with other central banks, have been unable to stem the sell-off, though they may be starting to," Barclays Capital analyst David Fernandez said in London. *Reports from AP, AFP and Reuters*

A WOMAN weighs pieces of gold at a jewelry shop in Mandaluyong, Bulacan, on Monday. Gold prices shot up to hit fresh record highs yesterday as investors stepped up buying of the yellow metal due to the dollar's weakness and deepening US financial woes. AFP/JOE

FILIPINO workers walk past a Philippine Bank of Commerce branch in Hong Kong on Sunday. Money sent back to the Philippines by its army of migrant workers grew 13 percent from a year earlier to $1.3 billion in January, the central bank said on Friday. This followed record remittances of $14.4 billion in 2007. AFP

Republic of the Philippines

COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS

Manila

SUBJECT: CUT-OFF THE NUMBER OF VERIFIED DOUBLE MULTIPLE REGISTRANTS IN THE LIST OF VOTERS FOUND BY THE AUTOMATED BIOMETRICS SYSTEM AS OF MARCH 31, 2008

ATTORNEY [illegible], Director IV, Law Department

ATTORNEY [illegible], Director, Education and Information Department

ATTORNEY [illegible], Director IV, Election and Barangay Affairs Department

For inquiries: 15 March 2008

RESOLUTION NO. 8432

WHEREAS, Section 2 of Republic Act No. 8189 "The Voters Registration Act of 1996" declares that:

"It is the policy of the State to systematically, fairly, honestly and accurately conduct a general registration of all citizens and the preparation of a computerized list of voters. Toward this end, the Commission on Elections shall endeavor to establish a single, uniform and permanent list of voters;"

WHEREAS, the Commission on Elections is mandated to enforce and administer all laws relative to the conduct of elections, plebiscites, initiatives, referenda, and recalls;

WHEREAS, the promotion of credible elections is basically anchored on a clean voters' list;

WHEREAS, pursuant to the aforesaid policy declared by the State, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) conducted a mass registration from August 1, 2007 to January 31, 2008 and an additional registration of new Overseas Absentee Voters from February 1 to August 31, 2007 in accordance with Republic Act No. 9189 entitled "An Act Providing for a System of Overseas Absentee Voting by Qualified Filipinos Abroad, Appropriating Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes" (R.A. No. 9189), as amended by Republic Act No. 9369 entitled "An Act Amending Republic Act No. 9189, Otherwise Known as the Overseas Absentee Voting Act of 2003, and for Other Purposes" (R.A. No. 9369), and Republic Act No. 8189 entitled "An Act Providing for a Uniform and Computerized Voter Registration System, Defining the Qualifications of and Disqualifications from Voting, Creating for this Purpose a Permanent Office in Every City and Municipality, Appropriating Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes" (R.A. No. 8189), as amended by Republic Act No. 9225 entitled "An Act Providing for the Retention and Reacquisition of Philippine Citizenship for Natural-Born Citizens of the Philippines and for Other Purposes" (R.A. No. 9225), as implemented by Resolution No. 7837 dated December 11, 2006, entitled "In the Matter of the Implementation of Republic Act No. 9225 and Determining the Reacquisition of Philippine Citizenship or Retention Thereof by Natural-Born Citizens of the Philippines Who Have Become Citizens of Other Countries Upon Taking the Oath of Allegiance to the Republic of the Philippines and Its Effect on Availment of Rights, Privileges, Benefits and Obligations Under Philippine Laws" and Resolution No. 7902 dated March 6, 2007 "In the Matter of Promulgating the Rules and Regulations Governing the Implementation of Republic Act No. 9189, Otherwise Known as the Overseas Absentee Voting Act of 2003, and Appropriating Funds Therefor";

WHEREAS, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) has installed the latest Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) matching "cross comparison" algorithms and that despite the fact that some users (different names, etc.) have verified and reactivated their applications, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) has identified a total of [illegible] double registrants, [illegible] of whom were found to be still in the same municipalities or in other cities/municipalities and even in the same barangays;

WHEREAS, in view of the forthcoming August 11, 2008 ARMM Elections, the Commission, in the fulfillment of its constitutional mandate to conduct free, orderly, honest, peaceful and credible elections, must purge the list of voters of double registrants in order to comply with the constant principle of "one man, one vote" by declaring the real list of voters in the ARMM;

WHEREAS, it is imperative and logical that the policy and guidelines enunciated in the foregoing Resolutions be adopted for the purpose of purging the names of the double/multiple registrants from the said voter's list;

WHEREAS, for the registration in terms of date of time shall suppress and remain valid and the deletion of the subsequent registration will not result in the loss of the voter's right to vote;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Commission, by virtue of the powers vested in it by the Constitution, the Republic Act of the Philippines, the Omnibus Election Code, Republic Act No. 9189, Republic Act No. 9369, Republic Act No. 8189, **RESOLVED**, as it hereby **RESOLVED**, to promulgate the following procedures to be observed by all Election Officers/Acting Election Officers and Election Registration Board (ERB) in the ARMM, and not to act by on the names of the registrants who appear in the list of double registrants provided by PPCRV (voter copy) to wit:

1. The Information Technology Department (ITD) shall print sixty (60) copies of the list of voters with photo/multiple registrations, for barangay only (municipality, reflecting the status of only the said barangay) and Application Forms (APPLIFORM) and Affidavit of Registrations.

2. The print copy together with the CD (each CD per city/municipality with records by address shall be delivered by the ITD Director to the Regional Election Director (RED) of the ARMM, Cotabato City, **NEGROS OCC** on or before **MARCH 20, 2008** for dissemination to the following personnel to be delivered by an Election Officer/Acting Election Officers and Election Registration Board (ERB) in the ARMM, and not to act by on the names of the registrants who appear in the list of double registrants provided by PPCRV (voter copy) to wit:

3. The ED shall:

   a. **NOTIFY THE ERB members:**

      (1) Post the said list in two (2) copies before the March 20, 2008 ERB hearing in the bulletin board of the area in the city/municipal hall or any other conspicuous public place;

      Any interested party may file their objection/opposition on or before March 28, 2008.

      (2) Furnish the Dominant Majority Party and the Dominant Minority Party and the Citizens' Arm in the locality a copy of the said list.

      (3) Submit the said list to the ERB which shall convene on March 20, 2008 for the purpose of hearing and deciding the names found in the said list on March 28, 2008.

      (4) Serve notice of the date, time and place of ERB hearing to the members of the ERB, Dominant Majority Party, Dominant Minority Party and the Citizens' Arm and issue the same in the city/municipal hall, or in before March 25, 2008.

   b. **DURING THE HEARING:**

      Prepare for minutes of the ERB proceedings in three (3) copies.

   c. **AFTER THE HEARING:**

      (1) Mark in red (3) Certified Xerox (CX) the three (3) copies of the list of deletion double registrations with names, complete addresses and reasons.

      (2) Retain one (1) copy of the minutes for his file and transmit the minutes and the copy of the list of double registrations with what names/ballots in the Provincial Election Supervisor (PES) who shall personally deliver on or before May 31, 2008, the following:

         a. One (1) CD each to the Information Technology Department (ITD) and Election and Barangay Affairs Department (EBAD); and

         b. One (1) copy of the Minutes each, to the Office of the Deputy Executive Director for Operations (DEDO) and EBAD.

      (3) Post the lists of the deletion double/multiple registrants reflecting therein their names, addresses and the reasons of registration, at least three (3) days in the bulletin board of the city/municipal hall or in any other conspicuous public place.

      (4) Furnish the Dominant Majority Party and Dominant Minority Party and Citizens' Arm copies of said list.

      (5) Remove from the list of voters for the ARMM all the registrants whose names were deleted from the CVL.

      (6) File the minutes (ERB) in a separate folder to be labeled "DOUBLE/MULTIPLE" (to facilitate retrieval).

      (7) Keep in the custody and care the said folder as documentary evidence for future court actions, if any, and/or other relevant purposes.

4. On the date of the hearing, April 28, shall delete the names of voters with subsequent registrations as in the CVL, said in the immediately preceding sections.

5. Any voter who has established his residence in the place where he/she subsequently registered may file his/her application for transfer of his/her records from the CVL pursuant to the Resolution No. 7902 dated March 6, 2007 entitled "In the Matter of Promulgating the Rules and Regulations Governing the Implementation of Republic Act No. 9189, Otherwise Known as the Overseas Absentee Voting Act of 2003, and Appropriating Funds Therefor".

The deletion of the subsequent registration shall not be a bar to the filing of the appropriate charges, if any.

Let this Resolution and Barangay Affairs Department implement this Resolution and the Education and Information Department to undertake a massive information campaign on the publication of this Resolution, at least two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines, and immediately furnish copies thereof to all concerned Election Officers, Provincial Election Supervisors, and Regional Election Directors in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

SO ORDERED.

ROBERT S. BENEDICTO
Acting Chairman

RENE V. SARMIENTO
Commissioner

NICODEMO T. FERRER
Commissioner

ROMEO T. MACAPAGAL
Commissioner

ATTESTED:

JOSE A. BALAGUER
Secretary

(CE-March 14, 2008)

P202-M lotto pot up for grabs

From page A1

box mark, the biggest prize ever won in the history of the country's online lottery game.

"The PCSO-million pot was won by six people in October 2002. That was our biggest prize for the lotto 6/49 draw. This is the 58 seventh draw and nobody has won. The pot for the March 17 draw could break any records," Cruz told the business.

P30M in minor prizes

As of Sunday, the prize had reached P184,732,556. No one was able to hit the winning combination: 5-6-15-17-21-38.

"There were people who let us three to four of the six drawn numbers and won minor prizes," Cruz said.

Altogether, the PCSO gave out some P30 million to minor prize winners in the last draw.

P54,808 each

The winners included 137 bettors who got five numbers out of the winning combination, and collected P54,008 each.

A total of 7,923 bettors got four of the six numbers in the winning combination and pocketed P1,660 each.

A total of 144,491 placed bets on three out of the six numbers and each won P180.

Observing Lent

The PCSO was no least stiller, chalking up one of its biggest lotto sales in a single day Sunday's sales on 6/49 tickets soared to 124,855,040.

The agency did not disclose the total ticket sales for the entire 15 draws of the 6/49 game.

Cruz said that there would be no draws for the duration of the Holy Week—in observance of Lent—and that the lottery would resume on March 24, a Monday.

HOPEFUL millionaires form a line outside a lotto outlet in Quezon City. A PCSO spokesperson said Monday the prize for the sixth lotto draw on Thursday next week could go beyond P200 million.

Sick Sumilao tillers vow to keep up march around Palace

By Maryjean C. Ortiz

DESPITE EXPOSURE TO THE ELEMENTS, their spirits remain strong.

But months of marching in ultraviolet sun and cold weather, drinking tap water and breathing in the city's polluted air, a third of the 144 farmers from Sumilao, Bukidnon, fell sick over the weekend.

Attorney Rag-as, the group's legal counsel, said 50 farmers were under medication for a variety of illnesses — fever, coughs and colds.

"Nine farmers had been taken to the San Juan de Dios Hospital where I have been diagnosed with typhoid fever," Rag-as told the Inquirer in an interview.

The lawyer said their exposure to the insidious elements may have caused the farmers' illnesses.

"They are also adjusting to the city's water and the pollution," Rag-as said.

He said that some of farmers, although sick, insisted on joining the group's invincible March around Malacañang yesterday.

"They are adamant in their decision to stay in Manila despite what they are going through," Rag-as said.

Since the beginning of this month, the 144 farmers have been marching every day from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. around Malacañang and would continue to do so until the government re-

Rights groups seek end of dolphin show

By Lelia B. Salaverria

AN ANIMAL RIGHTS GROUP AND AN EMBASSY-ESTABLISHED have asked the Court of Appeals to order the Department of Justice to prosecute a Subic-based firm for continuing to present marine mammal shows in violation of the Animal Welfare Act.

Ms. Teresita Ulep-Interviews-Lichauco of the Philippine Animal Welfare Society Inc. (Pawsi) and Ms. Theresa Concepcion of Earth Island Institute (EII) said yesterday the court should nullify the DOJ resolution that led to the dismissal of the case filed against the Subic Bay Marine Exploratorium (SBME) and six officials for allegedly failing to register their business with the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) as required by law.

The two groups further asked that the DOJ be directed to refile the criminal case against the SBME officials.

The SBME runs Ocean Adventure, which features sea lions and false killer whales in its shows.

Willing to register

The DOJ resolution, issued on Nov. 6, 2007, had said it was not clear if the Animal Welfare Act also covered marine mammals like dolphins, sea lions and false killer whales.

The resolution, a reversal from an earlier DOJ ruling, also said the SBME officials could not be criminally prosecuted because they were willing to register in compliance with the law.

Because of the resolution, the Quezon City Metropolitan Trial Court dismissed the criminal case against SBME officials Victor Ely Desmond, John Corcoran and Earl Leslie.

In their petition, Pawsi and EII said it was clear from the deliberations in Congress that the Animal Welfare Act includes marine mammals and not just land animals.

They quoted Sen. Edgardo Angara who had said during the deliberations that the law was "comprehensive enough... to cover all creatures on earth whether land, sea or lake."

"The public respondent (or DOJ) wholesomely and capriciously twisted a blind eye to the legislative intent of the law and unwittingly gave credit to the assertions of the private respondents, albeit the admitted fact that they did not register in accordance with the law," said Pawsi and EII.

They also pointed out that the SBME officials had admitted that the firm did not follow the law, as they were willing to register with the BAI. The firm had, in fact, registered with the BAI late only in 2006.

This showed that a violation was committed, since the firm had been operating since 2005, the petitioners said.

But the DOJ, they added, ignored the evidence by saying that the SBME could not be prosecuted since it was willing to register with the BAI.

'Dry run' for Subic to Clark highway

Front page A1

ment Authority (BCDA) said.

Today's dry run from Clark to Tipo in Subic will last from 3 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., after which the highway will be closed because of the lack of night lighting, officials said.

From Wednesday until March 26, the tollway would be open from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Vehicles that would be allowed to use the expressway are light vehicles, chartered buses and motorcycles with engine displacement of 400 cc and higher.

The weeklong dry run is intended to ease the traffic this Holy Week, BCDA president Narciso Abaya said.

Right-of-way problems, lack of heavy equipment, tunnel drains for rushed work, and kickbacks allegedly involving some BCDA officials in exchange for contracts were among the issues that beset the project.

Rosito Bernardo, deputy administrator for corporate communications of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA), said the tollway would cut travel time between the Subic and Clark free ports to just 30 minutes—from the roughly one hour and 30 minutes using the old consolidated route.

Toll fees on the new expressway would be waived during the Holy Week.

'Fun and adventure'

After the Holy Week dry run, the tollway will be temporarily closed for final preparations before it officially opens next month.

"From either south or north Luzon, motorists going to Subic can take the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX), exit at the interchange going to Clark, then move smoothly to Subic for a holiday of fun and adventure," Bernardo said.

BSMA said that the SCTEx, a major project of the Arroyo administration, covers a total distance of 93.77 km, and has at least 14 bridges.

The project is divided into two sections—the 58.3-km Subic-Clark spur and the 43.27-km Clark-Subic section.

THE SUBIC-CLARK-TARLAC Expressway (SCTEx), a major project of the Arroyo administration, took three years to build, covers a total distance of 93.77 km and has at least 14 bridges. It will be open to motorists—for free—starting today until March 24 for a weeklong trial run.

5 interchanges

The Subic-Clark part is designed to give motorists easier access to Pampanga, Bataan and Zambales.

The expressway cuts out eight lowclearance, including Floridablanca, Porac in Dolores, Clark, Dinalupihan, Angeles, Mabalacat, Subic and Subic, according to Ed Dumlao-an, chairman of the Subic-Clark Alliance for Development Council, which oversees development projects in the area.

In a media briefing on Friday, BCDA vice president Alison Zora said that after the Holy Week, the Subic-Clark segment would be closed again "to allow for further finishing which would ensure that the tollway continues to operate flawless."

BCDA officials have said the faster movement of goods and people along the Subic-Clark corridor should spur more investments and greater economic development in Central Luzon.

Abaya clarified that the BCDA had not yet issued certificates of acceptance to the project's two contractors, Italian Corp., Chiyoda Corp., JFE Engineering Corp. and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd. Joint Venture built the Subic-Clark section.

Hanjin-Taisei-Nippon Steel Joint Venture constructed the 43.27-km Clark-Subic portion.

Toll rates

"There are still rectification works that are being done," Abaya told the lawmen.

Also, the BCDA and toll operators for the first six months—the joint venture of the Ayala Corp., Philippine Reclamation and Development Corp., Egis Road Operation and Tollways Management Corp.—will still need to publish the rates in comply with a requirement of the Toll Regulatory Board (TRB).

Earlier, BCDA executive vice president Jesse Perez Bi said the rates would most likely start at P2.40 per km. The TRB has yet to announce the approved rates.

Abaya said the full opening might be set in the third or fourth week of April this year.

Guide to motorists

Here is how motorists could reach Subic via the SCTEx: From the NLEx, take the spur connection between Barangays Dau and Mo. Sun in Mabalacat. From there, go to the SCTEx Clark logistics toll plaza, head to the bridge and follow the loop of the ramp toward Subic.

Those bound for Bataan may exit at the Dinalupihan interchange through the Roman Highway.

Motorists from Subic-bound motorists from Subic and Bataan may enter the SCTEx through the Tipo toll plaza or Dinalupihan toll plaza. Both lead to the Clark logistics toll plaza that heads to the spur interchange toward NLEx.

Longer than Marcos road

The Gapan-San Fernando-Olongapo Highway (later the Jose Abad Santos Avenue), which is the regular route to Pampanga, Bataan and Zambales, is still open to traffic.

The National Economic and Development Authority approved the SCTEx project in 1998. The highway's actual construction began in March 2006.

As originally envisioned, the 94-km tollway connects the Subic and Clark free ports and makes these into a single international logistics hub.

At the end of the highway is the Luisita Industrial Park in Tarlac City, where several Japanese companies do business, mostly in electronics.

Abaya said the SCTEx is longer than the North Diversion Road—now the NLEx—built during the time of the late President Ferdinand Marcos. The NLEx spans 84 km.

GMA appoints Brion 15th justice of the Supreme Court

Front page A1

but he did not know that he was going to occupy the vacant seat in the 15-member tribunal.

Asked by reporters if he would vote on the petition of former Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri, Brion said: "I will be in the Supreme Court for the next 12 years. I think we will face a lot of hot issues that the court will deliberate upon, so why even start early?"

Neri went to the high court to stop the Senate from answering him after he refused to answer questions involving his Arroyo during the Sept. 26 hearing on the $329-million National Broadband Network (NBN) deal with China's ZTE Corp.

The questions centered on what the President told Neri after he reported to her that former Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos had offered him a P200-million bribe to endorse the ZTE deal that would connect all government offices via the Internet.

During oral arguments on March 4, a large part of the questioning by some justices appeared to make a case for restoring the executive to executive privilege to cover up alleged cases of bribery.

Ms Arroyo has scrapped the NBN project, but claims that she and her husband received bribes from the deal have triggered widespread calls for her resignation.

Impartiality

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye was asked by reporters to comment on an opposition statement that Brion was appointed to the tribunal so he could tilt the balance on the petition it is now hearing in favor of Neri and Malacañang.

Bunye pointed out that in all 12 of the justices were Arroyo appointees.

"They have always acted with impartiality and in accordance with law and I believe this will be followed by Secretary Brion," Bunye said.

He described Brion as a "man of proven integrity and independence."

The Inquirer has learned that Brion had offered the "compromise solution" after sensing a stalemate among the 14 justices during the marathon hearing on March 4.

The compromise plan would have allowed Neri to answer his testimony before the Senate inquiry without pointing again the questions they had asked previously because they have been deemed submitted to the high court for resolution.

However, the Senate rejected the Puno solution.

Only time will tell

"If you go by intentions, (2010) might have intended the appointment to bolster her chances or her side of the argument strategy," Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said. "Only time will tell how he will vote."

Brion's appointment came less than a month after the retirement of Justice Angelina Sandoval Gutierrez on Feb. 27. The Presidential had 90 days to fill the vacancy.

Puno was asked if Brion would be allowed to vote on the Neri petition, but the Chief Justice told reporters to ask the newest magistrate instead.

Only the justices who had participated in the deliberations on a case would vote on it, Supreme Court spokesperson Jose Midas Marquez said. But he did not say if the deliberations that would define the parameters of executive privilege had been completed.

A lawyer from a top law firm told the Inquirer that Brion's independence was an issue because he was such the Cabinet member before his appointment. But another lawyer, associated with the judiciary, said Brion was known to have his own mind.

Independence not an issue

"I don't think (Independence) will be an issue because while I was in the executive ... my attention was fully focused on the executive. This time around, I'm with the judiciary and my attention, everything I've got, will be fully focused on the judiciary," Brion said.

He said the President never gave him any instructions on his appointment.

"No, congratulations. You have a new job," he quoted Ms Arroyo as telling him when she passed by him at the Rizal Mural Church where Cabinet members were hosting a Lenten retreat.

Brion, 61, became labor secretary in July 2008 after serving as Court of Appeals justice for three years. He earned his law degree from Ateneo de Manila where he graduated cum laude.

He topped the bar exams in 1974 with a grade of 91.65 percent.

Brion is married to Antonietta Arriesta, with whom he has two children, Antonella and Antonio II. With a report from Christine O. Avendaño

US think tank warns RP on peril of Spratlys study

Front page A1

The Heritage Foundation, however, said that from a US standpoint it would be "far more preferable" for President Macapagal-Arroyo to finish her term rather than be ousted through extraconstitutional means, "even if it incites a chorus of scorn" over the NBN-ZTE and other issues.

It observed that the NBN-ZTE scandal had aroused "still-meager protests" and that "public outrage has not reached a level that rises our sensible sentiment."

But the group also echoed warnings from critics of the Spratlys agreement, saying a "study today" of the area's economic potential may eventually threaten Philippine sovereignty and ultimately reinforce Chinese claims in the territory.

The Washington think tank's diplomatic and geopolitical scenarios, politics in Manila going completely off the rails should be a serious concern," said Walter Lohman, director of the foundation's Asian Studies Center.

For sale

"Even more disturbing is the thought that a pillar of the United States' historic presence in the Pacific may be for sale," Lohman said in an article titled "Off the Rails to the Philippines" and released on Friday.

The 15-year-old Heritage Foundation is a research and educational center based in Washington DC. It describes itself as an institute that promotes conservative public policies based on principles of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values and a strong national defense.

Its recommendations are generally addressed to the White House and US Congress, as well as the US academe, media, and public policy communities.

Lohman said "the most spectacular charge to emerge from the (NBN) controversy is that the contract flows from a 2000 China-Philippines deal to put aside sovereignty claims in the South China Sea in order to consider a joint seismic study."

Threat to sovereignty

The Heritage official was referring to the three-year Joint Marine Seismic Undertaking (JMSU), an agreement first reached between China and the Philippines. Vietnam was later included in the agreement after the country, being another Spratlys claimant, registered its protest.

Lohman spoke of the "obvious danger" that the tripartite cooperation contemplated under the JMSU "will eventually threaten Filipino sovereignty." He noted that the area covered by the study was "far from the China mainland, but close to the Philippines."

He further warned: "A study today will lead to a joint upping of resources tomorrow and ultimately reinforce Chinese claims in the territory."

Such a "concession" was difficult to understand strictly from an assessment of the Philippine national interest, Lohman said.

Just data gathering

The Arroyo administration has defended the JMSU, which requires this June, saying it is just a "data-gathering effort among oil companies" from the three countries.

Malacañang, mainly through former Energy Secretary Vicente Perez and former Philippine National Oil Co. president Eduardo Manalac, maintained that the JMSU was "scientific in nature" and not a treaty that would affect any territorial claims of the Philippines.

Lohman noted that the NBN-ZTE deal was "only one element to emerge from the $1 billion per year Chinese project horse offered since after the deal on the seismic study."

Dozens of deals

The Chinese loan program extends until 2010, Ms Arroyo's last year in office and "has already facilitated dozens of deals beyond the ZTE broadband project," he said.

"Another massive deal that has aroused suspicion is the 25-year concession in the Philippines' power grid," Lohman said.

He was apparently referring to the awarding to Monte Oro Grid Resources the rights to operate the assets of National Transmission Corp. (Transco). Monte Oro counts among its partners Enrique "Ricky" Razon, port operator supposed and a treasurer of the administration ticket Team Unity in last year's senatorial elections. Razon, who has insisted in a port in Shandong province, denied that he was the financier of Team Unity.

"The biggest privatization in Philippine history, the $4.2-billion deal has a similar confluence of factors: Chinese involvement, high-value assets, and charges of connections to the First Family," Lohman said.

He said what was alarming about these many was the possibility that corruption in the Philippines may have reached the point of bringing national interests.

Lohman noted that one controversy on the JMSU, for instance, had called the deal an act of "treason" on the part of Ms Arroyo.

"While to date the evidence of a connection between the seismic deal and official corruption appears circumstantial, the new depths being plumbed by this 'debate' are reason enough to be concerned," he said.

Fix the system

But Lohman said Ms Arroyo deserved a fair hearing "if for no other reason than that she is the duly elected President. If not guilty of treason, (her) government may yet garner enough trust among the Filipino electorate to put the executive beyond it."

If the President's critics have assured that the impeachment process has itself become "too corrupt to render an accurate judgment, the answer does not lie in appeal to extra-constitutional means, but in a renewed effort to fix the system, however difficult and lengthy it may be," Lohman said.

Calling the Philippines a "a natural American ally," Lohman said that "from the perspective of a concerned friend, it would be far more preferable for the President to finish her term in office—even under a cloud of suspicion—than for the Constitution to be breached."

He said that the United States "should help (the Philippines) avert what has the potential to become a major constitutional crisis."

The United States should also "play a caution to the Philippines, Lohman said.

"The US does to Filipino friends no good by pretending corruption is any less than a cancer eating away at its body politic ... Above all, the US must be repeat clear that it supports the constitutional order in the Philippines," he said.

Malacañang yesterday said it agreed with the US government that the NBN-ZTE controversy had not affected Philippine-US ties, as observed by the Heritage Foundation.

"We agree on terms this enlarged offices on the US government has been denied by the US ambassador herself and I guess that's reasonable stand to make," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye told reporters.

"We agree with the stand of the US ambassador that this has not affected our relations," Bunye said. With a report from Christine O. Avendaño

FORMER SEN. RAMON MAGSAYSAY JR. (2nd from left) receives the plaque symbolizing the inclusion of his late father President Ramon Magsaysay's Credo in the ideals of the Ang Kapatiran Party from AKP president Rene Pernello (center). Looking on (from left) are Manolo Dayrit, AKP chair emeritus; Mila Magsaysay-Valenzuela and AKP founder Hardy Pathano. AQUILINO PIMENTEL JR.

RM extolled as role model

THE ANG KAPATIRAN PARTY (AKP) LIONized the memory of the late President Ramon Magsaysay on his 51st death anniversary yesterday by making him the party's role model.

In rites held last Friday at the RM Center in Manila, AKP president Senator Aquilino Pimentel Jr. pledged a plague in two of the late president's children—former Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. and Mila Magsaysay-Valenzuela—symbolizing the inclusion of their father's Credo, the 10 principles and beliefs upon which his philosophy of service was anchored, in the party's ideals.

'Do your share in nation-building'

"The AKP believes that with the inspiration of President Magsaysay, the country's most beloved president, now servant leaders who are imbued with the highest levels of morality and integrity and whose unwavering commitment to serve their fellowmen will be encouraged to do their share in nation-building and social transformation," Pimentel said.

"By adopting RM as the party's role model, the party expects and hopes to emulate him for his simplicity, humility, caring nature, courage, resolution to improve the lot of his countrymen with selfless devotion, and for his belief that for a government to last and for it to be welfare-oriented, it must have sovereignty and reflect the will of the people," said AKP founder Hardy Pathano.

In Castillejos, Zambales, Magsaysay's hometown, the National Historical Institute and the municipal and provincial governments led commemoration rites marking his death anniversary at the Presidential Home.

A guerrilla leader during Hukbalahap II, military governor of Zambales, representative in the 1st and 2nd Congress, and defense secretary to the administration of President Elpidio Quirino, Magsaysay was elected president in 1953 in a landslide.

Elected at The City because of his common touch, his presidency was cut short when the plane flying him back to Manila from Cebu crashed on Mt. Manunggal on March 17, 1957.

'7 Last Words' to air on Channel 2

THE BIG SHARON Communications Foundation Inc. and the Shrine of the Divine Word (SVD) will air over ABS-CBN Channel 2 the "7 Last Words" of Christ on Good Friday from 12 to 3 p.m.

All the preachers, except one, belong to the Society of the Divine Word (SVD). They are Fr. Del San Luis, SJ; Hermes Digalosa, Fr. Jerry Orbos, Fr. Leo Nieto, Fr. Alfie Bathan, Sr. Vivi, Fr. Antonio Marquez and Fr. Ben Hernedo.

Personalities from various sectors will share their spiritual journeys based on the "7 Last Words." They are Tita Sandra Lee Wilson, Rita Magdalena Kasperaq, Alvin Lazaro Sr., Candy Bengil-Ines, Gary Valenciano and Mong Tarog.

The public is invited to hear the "7 Last Words" at the Shrine of the Divine Word at the Christ the King Mission compound on E. De Jesus Boulevard, Quezon City or watch it over Channel 2.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, March 18, 2008
Holy Tuesday

1st Reading: Is 49:1-6
Gospel: Jn 13:21-33, 36-38

Jesus was distressed in spirit and said plainly, "Truly, one of you will betray me." The disciples then looked at one another, wondering who he meant. One of the disciples, the one Jesus loved, was reclining next to Jesus; so Simon Peter signaled him to ask privately who he meant.

And the disciple who was reclining next to Jesus asked him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, "I shall dip a piece of bread in the dish, and he to whom I give it, is the one."

So Jesus dipped the bread and gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And as Judas took the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus then said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly."

None of the others reclining at table understood why Jesus said this to Judas. As he had the common purse, they may have thought that Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the feast." Judas left as soon as he had eaten the bread. It was night.

Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. God will glorify him, and he will glorify him very soon. My children, I am with you for only a little while; you will look for me, but, as I already told the Jews, so now I tell you: where I am going you cannot follow.

Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but after words you will." Peter said, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I am ready to give my life for you." Jesus answered, "To give your life for me? Truly I tell you, the cock will not crow before you have denied me three times."

COMMENTARY

At Peter would one day stand as the unshakeable rock of faith, giving his very life upon an unwavering trust in the person of Jesus. But this day Peter would experience an anguish and pain unlike that would have knocked at our first door.

Courage, in standing up for the Lord would be nothing in that trial, dying—moving, but what was before him was a test of his very faith. His courage in standing up for our belief in the Lord were he lacking in us. May the risen Lord whom we trust in the duty He...

A REMINDER

To all Classifieds and Job Market advertisers,

Please be informed that the deadline of reservation/booking and material submission for March 21, 2008 (Sunday) placements will be on March 19, 2008 (Wednesday). An earlier deadline has been set because of the Holy Week break.

We are likewise encouraging advertisers to place print advertisements in our Easter Sunday issue.

For questions or clarifications, please do not hesitate to call any of our Classified Ads branches.

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OPINION

Magsaysay credo

FIFTY-ONE YEARS AFTER RAMON MAGSAYSAY'S death, the nation is being reminded of the values and principles for which he stood. Ang Kapatiran Party, founded by Nandy Bucheco of Gawilan Society fame, last week adopted Magsaysay as the party's role model in rites held at the Ramon Magsaysay Center on Roxas Boulevard.

EDITORIALS

During these times when many of our government leaders have lost their moral compass, and when even Church leaders are afraid to take a strong stand on public issues, the adoption of Magsaysay as a party's moral icon takes on added relevance. Magsaysay lived and practiced a 10-point Credo, some of whose tenets are especially relevant today:

"I believe that a high and unwavering sense of morality should pervade all spheres of governmental activity.

"I believe in the majesty of constitutional and legal processes, in the inviolability of human rights.

"I believe that the President should set the example of having a big heart, an honest mind, sound instincts, the virtue of healthy impatience and an abiding love for the common man."

The call for a high sense of morality is very timely today, when graft and corruption has become an accepted fact of public life and when the highest leaders of the land are more concerned with covering up the truth than in exposing it.

The call for respect for constitutional and legal processes and the inviolability of human rights is also very relevant at this time when officials who are mandated to guarantee and protect these processes and rights are the very first to violate them.

The tenet that calls for the President to set the example of, among other things, having "an honest mind" is addressed to the present tenant of Malacañang who has been found many times to have engaged in prevarication.

We commend President Magsaysay's Credo to all our government leaders, for them to reflect on it during the Lenten season. Reflection on the Credo will do a lot of good for their soul, and also a lot of good for the nation.

Marcos credulity

THERE SEEMS TO BE A GRADUAL EFFORT TO rehabilitate the name and memory of the dictator Ferdinand E. Marcos, the most corrupt president the country ever had until (according to Pebe Aida's October 2007 survey) Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo entered the scene.

The latest group that is trying to form a better image of Marcos is the Sinagtalad Fraternity of the University of the Philippines, composed of former members of the Reserved Officers Training Course. The fraternity, in elevating Marcos to its hall of fame, said that it was honoring him for his leadership: "that has been emulated by [succeeding] Filipino leaders."

What leadership is the fraternity talking about? A leader is supposed to promote the good of his nation. Marcos destroyed the country's moral fabric and corrupted almost everything that he touched—the three branches of government, the military, the police and even the academe.

The Marcos regime killed, maimed, tortured and caused the disappearance of thousands of militants, activists and opposition ers. Marcos and the law as an instrument to try to perpetuate himself in power and to amass great unexplained wealth. He plundered the economy; estimates of his unexplained wealth range from $5 billion to $10 billion.

A decade ago, historian Ed Olbera de Jesus deplored society's tendency to forget the evils of martial law. The social cost of forgetting, he said, is the Filipino's increasing inability to determine what is right and what is wrong. This causes a decline of their values and their sense of ethics.

It has often been said that the Filipinos are a forgiving and forgetful people. It is good to forgive, but before there can be forgiveness there must be confession and atonement. A culture of forgetfulness and impunity is making it possible to rehabilitate the image of the late dictator and is causing an endless cycle of repetition of crimes against the people.

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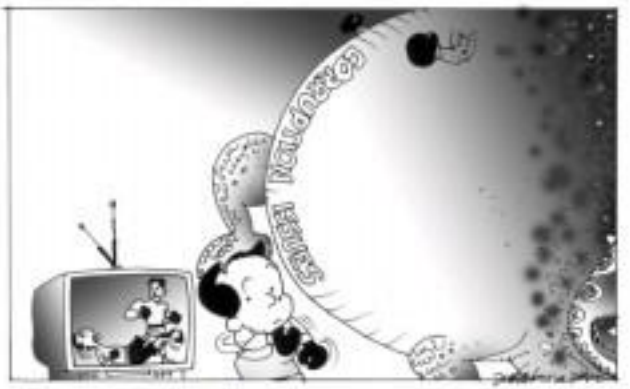


'Istambay' conscript

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

For MO Week, some chosen to run JBC-type men's movie "The Passion of the Christ." One of the main marketing accounts, in this award-winning film, is how an "immoral, unjust, unfair and deceitful" willy-nilly runs gruesome. Who IS more the Centurion, like many of us, merely in the wrong place at the wrong time? Others praise Fr. Ron Rolheiser screenplay as accurate below.

"IF HERMIE AS THOMAS, THROUGH FOREST earthly accidents, we're inside responsible for what is divine." Karl Rahner wrote those words as to describe what happened on Saint Joseph when he was asked by an angel in the Old Testament to blurt and suppress to the birth and raising of Jesus. "Take the child to yourself." Something of God was entrusted into his care, but because he retained it, distrust it, of because he himself was created on the events. He was asked to do something very special in the circumstances, because he was engaged to someone inside a great drama. Moreover, what he was asked to do radically reshaped his life, in a way not according to his own choosing.

Rahner's words are just as accurate when applied to Emanuel Cyprus. See most meaningful to help Americans to cross ...

[The Gospels give sparse details about Emanuel of Cyprus. He was a "preach." His own sons were named Alexander and Rufus. And his mom "from the countryside" crossed, at one point, the imperial road that led to the "Place of the Skull" or Golgotha. When Jesus collapsed from carrying his cross, the soldiers forced him to take it up. He never appears again in the scriptures.]

[Simon] was merely in the wrong place at the wrong time. [Being press-ganged to carry the cross became part of encounter with a condemned criminal.] Helping a wounded person carry his or her humiliation in front of a jeering crowd changes everything into the same reaction as helping Tiger Woods carry his golf clubs ...

Yet, ironically, this would be the main appeal. Years thing [Simon] would do in his whole life, earning him a place in history and holiness that one only be envied by the most famous ... Thousands of years from now his name will still be remembered—and by the right reasons, for helped carry the cross of Jesus.

[In the Gilbert movie, outside Catalina Arenas, is SAM the symbolic school of theology, "there are mistakes when the arms of Jesus and Simon are linked, as they bear the cross beam together."

No more grown weaker, Simon takes on increasingly a greater share of the burden. "We're almost there," he says more than once to urge him onwards over the last agonizing steps ... "In the place of execution, he who was forced to help the condemned criminal, stands by him almost as a friend. The Roman soldiers have to force him to leave ... Bearing the cross together creates a bond and a blessing. As they come to the end of their 'pilgrimage,' they are linked ... may we say it? ... in communion communion.

Here, Ellena seems to repeat what the nurses of all ages have told us: Even if the suffering placed upon you is extraordinarily taken on, as long as head and mind are somewhere open, something like an acceptance is there. If even psychologically like all of Gethsemane, courage enters into one's spirit ..... Because at the core of the Passion, is the creative presence of God's mercy and love.

"We exhale the often-quoted words of the poet Thad Claudel. 'God did not come to take away our suffering. He did not come to explain it. Rather, he came to fill it with his presence.' All we must do is to reach out, and in spite, touch his hand" ... as Simon did on the road to Calvary.]

[The Canadian Redemptorist agrees with the Filipino Atenean's insight into the cyrenaicus role.] There's an wonderful, important image here, namely the picture of a man or woman being victimized by circumstances so that he or she, largely by being at a given place at a given time, is outmaneuvered on the road chosen to maintain, unplanned for, humbling, disruption of his or her own agenda and dreams, and yet this unintended thing becomes, in the end, the most important thing he or she will ever do ...

The cross of Jesus appears to many forms. Whatever you are, the one who has to take care of an aging parent because circumstances so ranges that you are the one who happens to be living close by; whatever you are the parent of a handicapped child and are asked to do things ordinary parents aren't asked to do; whatever you are the one to whom the responsibility unduly patient at work chooses to reach out ...

Elaine of Cyprus was not central to the drama or meaning of Jesus' passion and death. So was an unimportant figure who happened to be standing in the right spot. Yet, in those circumstances unfathomably enfolded him and forced him to play an inglorious, self-effacing, but needed role. His own agenda and plans had to be sacrificed and his response was, no doubt, initially reluctant and resentful. But this unplanned for, unexpected, humble service became the most important thing he ever did, his signature piece, and gave him a place in history beyond the thousands and millions whose place in the chains of the was declared their superiors.

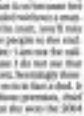
There's a lesson here for all of us. Henri Nouwen once wrote, "I used to go open about all the interruptions in my work until one day I realized that the interruptions were my real work."

Pete carelay accidents often do make us responsible for what a divine and they could be an to our real needs.

* * *

E-mail: jacolmar@gmail.com

Hello again



THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I'M ALL FOR WHAT THE FORMER SENIOR Government officials, aka the "Fifteen Least Honorees," are doing, which is demanding accountability in government. And asking GMA to look for compensating compassion from her government, the herself being in the "center of the storm up" of the storm scandals. The 40 GO of course are the top officials of our post-1986 government who have gathered to register shame at the current state of the nation. The officials have stepped down or asking GMA to resign, Vicente Paterno saying, "we have different preferences on how to whom the President should leave."

I'm all for this, except for a couple of things. One is rather technical—how the same agencies on themselves. You call for accountability, you yourself time there, or least shower, a capacity for it. Accountability is difficult by its capacity, it willingness, to admit to one part of the problem that made "rocket" or "rocket" possible. To connect contracts, albeit with the express assignment from her boss, Ronnie Ilarr, to apply set on there or make sure they did one cared immediately I don't wanna voice the 40 or so souls that now comprise the Former Senior Government Officials shouldn't do the same.

I myself have no forgiven that some of them were involved in a little recent scam that cost this country P14 billion. That scam being the Penoy Scandal. To describe the perpetrators of that scam here as mere immigrants, let alone illegal, is to admit to the fact of the perpetrators' being Filipinos. That is to say, to

Scrap Section 20

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cassman

DUTERTE HAS BASED HIMSELF ON HIS family background and the deterrence it. Multiple indicted Senate JV in 1998, including the presidency of 24 million) and police officials and fourth Secretary Francisco Duque, because she did not approve of one military official. Senator 20 was never successful in his first mention in the history of Sept 23 and three subsequent school year patrol, one of it, with Senators Rodolfo Biazon and Rafael Ileto during quite worked up, to no avail. Madrigal has not been more hysterical.

Obviously the Senate's appeal to local is self-deprecating, but her antics should only prod her colleagues to study how Senate 20 could be rescued. Such a propensity to abuse and to a weapon of mass destruction and reconstruction. There is a chance that we just to review the province in the 13, when it has modernized it, has to set up it altogether.

* * *

Friends, relatives and former associates of former President Fidel Ramos came in droves last Feb. 24 to the Ceremonial Hall of the Manila Hotel to celebrate in advance his 85th birthday, which actually falls on March 18. The attendance of the guests and respect that FVR continues to command especially among those who had served in his administration, that they all came despite the marked traffic caused by the Manila rally scheduled for the same day. Among the others in the celebrant was held where the participants were grouped by Chito Sta.Romana according to their years in the Ramos era. Thus there were the group of former Cabinet members, former ambassadors, former government corporate corporations exec, etc. as well as private groups associated with him such as the Phil Peso Fund and ex- all colleagues in the PMA.

This was followed by real dancing to the music of Tommy Lopez's band, with FVR dancing with all the ladies. At 80 indeed he looks hale and hearty. Hindi ba, FVR.

* * *

My husband said recently did some healing with my Chicago siblings when we all flew to Bohol to PAL and stayed in a small beach resort in Panglao, arranged by a good friend, businessman Ray Jalosjos. The resort owned by Ed Tenorio was not too much compared to the plush resorts in Panglao, but what's good is that each couple had its own individual cottage and we had the whole place ourselves.

Beautiful Bohol has so much to offer which is why I'm sure its tourism priority. Some of us went dolphin watching and island hopping, while others explored the wonders of Panglao; we took in the reputed sights such as the Chocolate Hills and the beautiful churches with their properties of interest, we visited the tarsier variety, watched in a floating restaurant on Loboc River and shopped for handicrafts at the Arraijanen Bus market. In Tagbilaran we were not content to rest on our delicious cuisine and lethargic at the Dragon Cafe in the garden of the restored home of former town mayor Gabby Clarin, who has conserved to restore Bohol's cultural heritage. Gabby's restaurant was always long of appetizers. In Panglao we had visited the ancestral cemetery of Bohol's first governor Don Gabriel Rafols, builder of the Rafols Ruins, which is now the site of the restored home of Rafols' descendants, the Clarins. Gabby has also been instrumental in the restoration of the Baclayon church and convent, which is one of the oldest churches in the country.

Bohol first elected Rep. Edgar Chatto and his wife Purita treated us to dinner in a lovely new home-restaurant-museum in Panglao, which he set up according to old Bohol cultural heritage, the Arnaiza, said to be a favorite haunt of Rizal called's group. Their delicious local cuisine, which he feeds the Rizal's fellow countrymen, spoke of cultivating the preservation of the culture. Chatto's home is filled with antiques and memorabilia of Bohol's past, and he has also set up a museum in honor of Rizal's mother, Teodora Alonso, who was born in Dapitan. Chatto's museum is a treasure trove of Rizal memorabilia

FSGO far more respectable

THIS REFERS TO THE HEADED STORY "GMA in matter-of-tone-up" (Inquirer, 3/14/08) The "Student Summer Government Officials" whom Malacañang derided as "no-nos" are, compared to the unscrupulous and clowns who compose the Palace "mafia," men of powers in regalia, honesty and competence, who lived by those qualities when they were in government service.

In fact, in manifestations of civility and in deference to authority, they are not asking for the ouster of the "mafiosi" in the government, still hoping, perhaps against all hope, for an honest election some 20 M. Typical of the Filipino character, these men of integrity are expressing their concerns about the present deplorable situation on emotion rather than reason.

But it is the nature of things in the mafia world that reason does not work. "Mafiosi" count whether their enemies with a ball of bullets, not with ballots. And judging by the look of things and by the character of the cops at municipal, town—not permanent—is the only reason to make her relinquish power.

—OSCAR PEÑARES,
superoil@hotmail.com

Rice scam probe should include NFA's regional chief

THIS REFERS TO THE NEWS ITEM TITLED "GMA orders probe of rice scam," (Inquirer, 3/11/08)

The investigation should not be limited to the provincial manager alone. It should include the regional director Alan B. Borja, who we believe was the one who gave instructions to the provincial managers.

For the record, our petition, which was signed by 61 employees (not farmers), was issued to express our opposition to the confirmed appointment of Borja for lack of moral ascendancy.

—EDILBERTO G. BAES,
chapter president, regional chair,
National Food Authority
Employees Association,
Cagayan de Oro Chapter,
Balay Cagayan de Oro City

Republic of the Philippines
SENATE
Pasay City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Senate of the Philippines invites all **ELIGIBLE registered bidders/suppliers/contractors** to apply for eligibility and to bid on the following:

DESCRIPTION	QTY.	PROJECT ALLOCATION	NON-REFUNDABLE FEE
PROPOSED REHABILITATION OF AIRCONDITIONING UNIT AND INSTALLATION OF THERMOSTAT CONTROL FOR THE TWO (2) AHU's SERVING THE SESSION HALL	LOT	PHP 330,000.00	PHP 500.00

The bidding documents shall be available to interested bidders/suppliers at the BAC Secretariat Office, Rm. 401, 4/F Senate of the Philippines, GSIS Building, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City from **8:30-12:00 NN, starting March 12, 2008** upon payment of non-refundable fee as indicated above. The schedule of pre-bidding conferences and submission/opening of bids are as follows:

PRE-BIDDING CONFERENCE	(MARCH 26, 2008 (Wednesday), 2:30 PM
SUBMISSION & OPENING OF BIDS	APRIL 2, 2008 (Tuesday), 2:00 PM

All particulars relative to the eligibility, bid evaluation, and award of contract shall be governed by the provisions of R.A. 9184 (likewise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act). Bids received in excess of the Approved Budget of the Contract (ABC) shall be automatically rejected at bid opening. LATE BIDS SHALL NOT BE ACCEPTED. ALTERNATIVE BIDS SHALL BE REJECTED.

This invitation is also advertised with the Government Electronic Procurement System (G-EPS) and posted at the Senate Bulletin Boards.

For inquiry, please call the BAC Secretariat Office at telefax no. 552-6601 local 1602 (c/o Rose de Castro).

THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES RESERVES THE RIGHT TO 1) REVIEW ALL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS; 2) REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS; 3) CONFISCATE THE BID BOND AND/OR FORFEIT APPROPRIATE LEGAL ACTION SHOULD A BIDDER BE FOUND TO HAVE VIOLATED R.A. 9184; 4) AWARD ANY DEFECTS CONTAINED THEREIN; AND/ OR 5) ACCEPT THE OFFER MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GOVERNMENT. ANY DECISION MADE BY THE SENATE IS FINAL AND EXECUTORY.

FURTHER, THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES ASSUMES NO OBLIGATION WHATSOEVER TO COMPENSATE OR INDEMNIFY THE BIDDER OR WINNING BIDDER AS THE CASE MAY BE, FOR ANY EXPENSE OR LOSS THAT SAID PARTICIPATE MAY INCUR IN ITS PARTICIPATION IN THE PRE-BIDDING AND BIDDING PROCESS. NOR DOES IT GUARANTEE THAT AN AWARD WILL BE MADE.

(Sgd.) **DIR. MA. TERESA S. BONOSO**
Acting Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI-March 13, 2008)

Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region V Legaspi City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO RE-BID FOR LEASE/ WAREHOUSING SERVICES FOR NFA REGION V FOR THE YEAR 2008

The National Food Authority, Region V, Legaspi City, invites all qualified Philippine corporations/cooperatives duly registered with SEC/CDA to apply for eligibility and to bid for the provision of lease and/or warehousing services of NFA rice and corn stocks in the following locations for the period January 1 to December 31, 2008 under the following terms and conditions:

Location	Aggregate Floor Area (sq. meters)	Minimum Warehouse Capacity (in Bags)	Estimated Utilization for No. of Months	Approved Budget for the Contract	Source of Fund
ALBAY:					
Ligao City	2,400	60,000	3	P84,000.00	Local Funds
Tabaco City	2,400	60,000	12	1,176,000.00	
Cam. Sur:					
Naga	1,200	30,000	4	168,000.00	Local Funds
Libmanan	600	15,000	6	252,000.00	
Sorsogon:					
Bulan	600	15,000	12	504,000.00	Local Funds
Irosin	600	15,000	12	504,000.00	
Sorsogon	600	15,000	12	504,000.00	
Masbate:	600	15,000	6	252,000.00	Local Funds
TOTAL	8,000			P 3,444,000.00	

The schedule of the bidding activities are as follows:

ACTIVITIES	DATE	TIME
1. Submission of Letter of Intent and eligibility requirements	March 17-21, 2008	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
2. Evaluation of bid submission and documents	March 17-21, 2008	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
3. Pre-bidding conference	March 24, 2008	10:00 AM
4. Submission of the accomplished bid proposals	April 2, 2008	8:00 - AM
5. Opening of bids	April 2, 2008	10:00 AM

The prospective bidders are required to submit a Letter of Intent upon payment of a non-refundable processing fee of Php 500.00 on or before the 21st day of March 2008 together with the following eligibility requirements:

1. Mayor's permit
2. Proof of operating under authority or license

The prospective bidder upon complying with the above requirements shall be allowed to purchase bidding documents at the RBAC Secretariat upon payment of the non-refundable fee of Php 1,000.00.

The warehouse(s) should be made of concrete with roof galvanized steel roofing, with a minimum capacity as individually specified above or less.

It should be located in a flood free area, in the city/town proper, or outskirts/suburbs, to avoid traffic problem in the transportation of the NFA rice/corn.

The prospective bidder must have a single largest contract completed within the last 3 years and similar to the contract to be bid except sales agreement/contract/lease must be at least fifty (50%) percent of the ABC.

The terms for the pre-bidding conference and opening of bids shall be at the NFA Regional Office, Rm. 204, Legaspi City.

Other requisites may be addressed to the RBAC Secretariat, NFA Legaspi City with telephone numbers (052) 480-1012/480-1013/480-1014/480-1015.

THE NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, WAIVE ANY FORMALITIES IN THE BIDDING AND ACCEPT THE BID DEEMED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GOVERNMENT. ANY DECISION MADE BY THE NFA IS FINAL AND EXECUTORY.

(Sgd.) **JOSE D. GUIDANI**
RBAC Chairman

(PDI - March 18, 2008)

'Lying is mother of all violence'

THIS IS A REACTION TO HELINDA Constantino's column titled "Why rally didn't succeed as united," (Inquirer, 3/9/08) It's truly interesting to note that while her full-blown invective Comrade Joe Quimo uses the Feb. 29 rally as a statement not to be underestimated, Constantino heaped the gathering (actually the biggest statement against the Arroyo administration) as a total turnout.

After listing the rally's ills (Yet I saw not a dismal turnout with desperate pleas, but focus of quiet anger and conviction especially among the youth. The youth, long accused by their elders as impervious to the political affairs of the land, came out in the streets in force, the vehicles wrong. They were involved, making a stand, full of frustration with the uneven government and channeling their disappointments with youthful optimism.

One must also take note here how the police stopped other people from outside Mowe-Manila from taking part in the gathering, and how many viewers were prevented by a government-run fly zone rather than seeing the rambling crowd of rally participants. The gathering, viewed by some in numbers, must more importantly be viewed in its generality.

The gathering, as for Quirino rightly said, was a statement.

On Jun Lozada's case, there are "facts" in proportion to Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's. Even in moral theology, venial sins do not cause death to the soul, whereas a single mortal sin does. Which is more deadly: Lozada's admissory or Ubay's plundering of the state by an Arroyo's complicity?

Of course, I do not consider Lozada's sins actually venial or small, but they are an anthill compared to Ubay's "Mt. Everest." Or to the scripture says, "A speck compared to a log."

Yes, Lozada has done much to atone for his sins and failings and has spoken, whereas Ubay has apologized for has not made amends.

Finally, during Cha-Cha field at UST which I attended, Fr. Rolando de la Rosa stressed that humility is truth. How many of us are humble and humble enough to admit our own mistakes in front of people and ask for forgiveness? The fact that Lozada said his "mea culpa" is already an opportunity for him to begin again.

Let me quote a line from Mahatma Gandhi. "Truthfulness in eyes more important than practicalness. Indeed, lying is the mother of all violence."

—MARI BAÑES,
maribanes@gmail.com

'Kuryente' and an Inquirer apology

I SALUTE THE INQUIRER FOR BEING the bigger person (newspaper) in effecting an Inquirer apology on the front page of its March 12 issue. I am, however, wondering what actions the Inquirer will do next:

a. Will heads roll because of the embarrassment that reporters and editors have done to the Inquirer with their "kuryente" story?

b. What specific measures will the Inquirer undertake so that such "kuryente" stories will be minimized?

I, of course understand that with the new's enthusiasm of reporters for a scoop, such stories cannot readily be avoided.

Having been a victim of such inaccurate stories in a prominent past, I, of course, would like to see the day when reporters would be more responsible. As the pen is mightier than the sword, its strikes cut much deeper, lingered repression, family humiliation and alienation are just the natural consequences.

—MIGUEL L. AQUINO,
aquino-pd@energy.com.ph

There's an ongoing investigation. Please be assured that, once the investigation is complete and if called for, heads will roll faster than you can say Speaker. Wish we could say the same about so-called Palace investigations.—Ed.

Transfer of veterans' hospital opposed

I RECENTLY MET SOME RETIRED officials and employees of the Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC) who are concerned as I am over the planned transfer of the VMMC to Quezon City. If the sale pushes through, it will really break my heart. It would be grossly unfair and inconsiderate to our veterans.

To me, as a child of a former US veteran who died in 1995, VMMC is part of my history (and I am sure it is to many others'). Also, I used to be the commander of the Bataan-Corregidor Americans Association in Seattle and, at present, one of the two advisors of the association.

I am a great believer in VMMC's mission. I have a group from this association who visit, every other year, historical spots in the Philippines, including those in Bataan and Corregidor and, of course, the VMMC.

Whatever is the government's reason for the sale, the best reasons that VMMC is going to lose money if the sale will deprive our veterans of excellent facilities easily accessible to them. The government may get a lot of money from the sale, but please don't transfer the VMMC just so the rich can have an excellent golf course where they can play golf and do business or earn profits.

After sharing with the media my opposition to the sale, I don't know what else I can do to help convince the government to keep the VMMC in its present location.

—CLODUALDO TOMAEL AGUAM,
M.D.A. '67C,
2039 20th Street,
Fortune Village 2, Sacramento City

Jpepa will open up more opportunities

WE, THE OFFICERS AND MEMBERS of the Filipino Exporters for National Progress (FEXP), composed of professionals and academicians, respectfully request the Senate to approve the Japanese-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (Jpepa) for the country's progress and our children's future.

The Senate foreign relations committee, chaired by Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago, has already completed its report after many weeks of hearings. It is not to endorse the treaty but to amend it to the Senate.

If the Senate fails to ratify the treaty, the Philippines will be further left behind by its Asean counterparts in forging bilateral economic treaties with Japan, the world's second largest economic power. Japanese economic ties with Asean's Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia are already in force. Thailand's is already in the works.

Once implemented, Jpepa will provide substantial economic opportunities for Filipino farmers, fishermen, workers, professionals and entrepreneurs. Japan will open wide its huge market to our agricultural and industrial exports, and admit Filipino professionals, including accountants, engineers and nurses, to practice their skills and profession in Japan.

Some of the Jpepa provisions would especially redress the Philippines' setbacks. On the contrary, the treaty expressly calls for the strict observance of the parties' environmental laws and regulations.

The ratification of Jpepa would translate to the initial P54.5 billion in gross domestic product, or an increase from 1.75 percent to 2.03 percent of real GDP, thus accelerating national progress and providing our people opportunities for greater income.

The Senate will be abandoning our people to their hopes if it is to let Jpepa die if it fails to ratify Jpepa.

—ATTORNEY ERICK MOSES,
spokesman,
Filipino Exporters
for National Progress,
fexp.08@gmail.com

Death of the academe

COMMENTARY

Sandra Jallorina

THE WORLD IS CHANGING SO rapidly that we in the academe often find ourselves perplexed. Attempts to keep up with the times have led to trying paradigms to explain our new realities. Unfortunately this hollowness is discreetly transmitted to our students.

Whether the younger university lecturer does still be in their 20s, with some luckily armed with their 30s eights, smirk at the emerging crop of "professors" are in their 30s and 40s. And of course let us no forget that some faculty members have become nonentities. They are in their approaching retirement age, and while some of them may have lost their own glorious magic of luster, they have not lost their potency as "mind fabricators" or as critical thinkers, for the "enlightened" have got a small minority.

Most of today's teachers are not on the cutting edge of critical thinking. They have remained intellectual stability and substantial is with consciousness. Rather, their minds are enthralled in the "how-to" of emerging technologies and industries, or they have been "problem-setting" inconsequential, parochial issues, or perhaps they never had a critical background to begin with. It is no wonder that we point out some salient issues.

These teachers are prejudiced against the different. One of the primary problems faced by educators today is the fact that most college level teachers are lacking in the skills to teach outdated "myths." In Mythologies (Mr. Paladin, 1972), Roland Barthes described myth as connotation with the very special task of providing charter and alibi. "Myth does not deny things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them; it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact."

Accordingly, myth describes and defines "what-is-not Gothic" which may neither be eternal nor true. And myth acts economically—it is deterministic and simplistic.

The problem with myth is that it empowers itself and maintains itself as the only acceptable mindset. To think otherwise and to dissent is to risk being demonized.

Too many teachers hold on to myths such as that above they encounter in differing situations, their mindset that dissenting opinions are off-the-discerning opinion as unfounded. This is academic regression.

These teachers don't realize that the nature of education has changed. One of the major changes in education is democratization. We now face an upsurge of enrollment where the socio-demographics of new enrollees are more dispersed and whose entry into the academia is quantitative. Such has translated to serious issues confronting universities into the late eighties and early nineties. Books for "fast and easy employment."

Whereas, before, education was meant as education for education's sake with an emphasis on broad liberal arts studies, today we have a utilitarian approach to education and many teachers have capitulated to commodification of social reality. This paradigm emphasizes and asks the question, "What are you going to do with your education?" The shift has gone from the "inherent need for education" to the "utility of education." Whereas, education was once a phenomenon in itself, nowadays education is only a means to an end: to find a job.

These teachers have a grasping mistrust of critical theory. These teachers refuse to situate the academe within the specific socio-historical context. While they talk of "getting out of the box," these teachers themselves remain within the stifling and archaic paradigm of 18th-century Enlightenment reasoning.

These teachers are not competent to contextualize even themselves in more contemporary terms, they produce students who have no grasp of the dynamic developments occurring throughout cultures and society. They cannot explain the broader contexts of the explosion of media, computers and new technologies, the restructuring of capitalism into its globalized phase, the diverse textual, political, racial and ideological shifts and upheavals in culture. Cultural texts are unique experiences of time and space. Thus students face the bewildering age of traditional or even "modern" forms of social organization without "post-modern" perspectives.

Time and space have become the current itself. There are action to be conceived or depicted, and it may become meaningful, be it only an energy or a reflection. True meaningfulness is in principled dimension. And this principled dimension is in the realm of praxis. The narrative plane is not the site of eternal verities; it is the site of ever-lasting questioning. Our eternal awareness of the same.

We are producing students who cannot question and "problematize" the world around them. We are producing a nation of morons. So, sir! Sir, sir!

Sandra Jallorina is a professional lecturer at De La Salle College of St. Benilde. After failing 26 percent of his students last term, he now promises to be more humane teacher.

Across the NATION

NEWSBRIEFS

■ BONACAY ISLAND

Tightened security for tourists this week

POLICE have tightened security on Boracay in anticipation of the deluge of tourists in the island resort during holy week.

Senior Insp. Austin Dadia, chief of the Boracay Special Tourist Police Office (BSTPO), said 30 more policemen from Manila and the Regional Mobile Group would be sent to the island this week to beef up the police force of 78 and a platoon of Army soldiers.

Intelligence monitoring against pickpockets, petty thieves and peddlers of illegal drugs, especially in crowded areas, will also be intensified.

Lucinda Cano, president of the Boracay Foundation Inc., said hotels and resorts were already fully booked.

Victor P. Burgos Jr., Inquirer Visayas

■ COTABATO CITY

Robbers shoot dead grocery cashier

SHELDON WAGO robbers on March 14 shot dead a cashier of a popular grocery store on her way to deposit sales money in the bank in Tulunan, Cotabato City.

Estrella Agas, 35, cashier of Candelpoint Grocery Center on Makakua Street, was walking alone along a busy street near the city plaza when she was held up at 9:20 a.m., Senior Supt. Wilfe Rangaine, city police chief, said.

She resisted and shouted to gain her bag of cash and checks, Rangaine said. The holdup man pulled a .45 cal. pistol and shot her four times, he added.

Witnesses brought Agas to the hospital but she died before receiving treatment.

Edwin Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao

■ ZAMBOANGA CITY

Suspected Sayyaf member arrested

A SUSPECTED Abu Sayyaf member believed to be involved in the abduction of a physician and 10 others in 1992, has been arrested in Isabela City in Basilan on March 13.

Roman Tibung, alias Tatong Pakar, was captured at Sherkhan Village, Chief Supt. Jaime Caringal, police chief for Western Mindanao, said. Tibung carried a P100,000 reward on his head.

Jaime F. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

■ LUCENA CITY

2 Army troops killed in Camarines ambush

TWO ARMY soldiers died in an ambush by New People's Army rebels in Camarines Sur on March 10, Maj. Randolph Cabangbang, spokesperson of the 4th Infantry Division Bicolandia Latin Command in Camp Elias Angeles, said.

Pfc. Rene M. Marin and Pfc. John Dave G. Tolaba, both of the B Company, 31st Infantry Battalion, were on a reconnaissance on their way back to their patrol base in Barangay Gatang in Lupi town when they were ambushed at around 6:30 p.m near Barangay Gatangan in Sagñay town, Cabangbang said.

Maj. Gen. Jeoffrez Sedotta, head of the 9th Infantry Division, said the soldiers were conducting community work and unarmed.

Rollie Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ TAGUM CITY

NPAs burn Globe tower equipment

NEW PEOPLE'S Army (NPA) rebels burned some of the equipment of Globe Telecom in Monkayo, Compostela Valley, on Wednesday, a day after government forces observed a few hours of unilateral truce to watch the televised fight of Filipino boxing champion Manny Pacquiao.

Supt. Ronald Dela Rosa, Compostela Valley police chief, said at least seven rebels ransacked about an the Globe tower in Purok 1 in Barangay Linuan also said 8 acts, poured gasoline on the tower and other equipment and burned them.

Antolin Calo, Inquirer Mindanao

Typhoid breaks out in Samar

SHIELDS FROM BAD SPIRITS Nelly Cortiche with different kinds of amulets in Iloilo City which become bestsellers during Holy Week. She sells "Carmen" for babies, "To-ok" and "Panagang" to shield persons from bad spirits.

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—THE Department of Health in Eastern Visayas pointed at the flooding of water sources as having greatly resulted in an outbreak of typhoid fever.

Boyd Cerro, DOH regional spokesperson, said his office received on Friday a report that 110 persons in Barangay Abgao, Dulag, Leyte, had typhoid fever. According to a 2008 census, Abgao had a population of 500.

The outbreak started on March 7 but was already contained last week, Cerro said. He said 39 persons of the cases were children of school age.

Cerro said he had also received reports of diarrhea and sinusitis in the region due to the flooding brought about by incessant rain.

At the height of severe flooding in February, diarrhea downed 178 persons in Tacloban, in the island town of Hunguian, in the island town of Hunguian, Southern Leyte, and in several towns of Eastern Samar.

In Hunguian, 64 cases of sinusitis were reported in the third week of February because of dirty water, Cerro said.

Most municipalities in the region get their water from open springs and deep wells, which are prone to contamination, so the occurrence of water-borne diseases is not a remote possibility, he said.

Cerro urged the people to boil water before drinking and to implement sanitary practices to prevent the spread of the water-borne diseases.

He said the DOH had started distributing medicines and intravenous fluids in the affected areas.

Methodist pastor nabbed in Mindoro for murder raps

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—A former militant leader who is now a pastor of the United Methodist Church (UMC) in Mindanao town in Occidental Mindoro was arrested on Sunday night on murder charges, police said.

Charged with four counts of murder and theft, Rev. Melchor Abesamis is now detained at the provincial jail in San Jose town, Chief Insp. Lauro Pelmes, Mamburao police director, told the Inquirer.

Pelmes said Abesamis was the secretary general of the united front known in Southern Tagalog of the Communist Party of the Philippines' regional party committee. "He is a big fish," he said.

Abesamis was implicated in the ambush-slay of Rogelio Ramos, Barangay Batasan, San Jose, which claimed the lives of four policemen.

"We are alarmed with the incidents like many other officials of human rights groups are either arrested or killed. Pastor Melchor is still fortunate because he was arrested and not abandoned by his parishioners," said Candice Rambo, UMC district superintendent, in an e-mail to the Inquirer.

Dante Guerra, secretary general of the human rights group Karapatan in Southern Tagalog, said, quoting Abesamis, that the arresting officers were in plain clothes and did not present a warrant.

Pelmes said, however, that police had a warrant issued by Regional Trial Court Judge Jose Jacinto Jr. in Occidental Mindoro.

Aside from Abesamis' name, those of 22 others were in the warrant, the Inquirer learned.

Guerra said what happened to Abesamis was similar to the abduction and detention of church people who had worked with militant groups. "The government is again creating trumped-up charges against personnel and former militant leaders in cause for among people and prevent them from joining progressive organizations," she said.

Abesamis had headed Karapatan in Occidental Mindoro before his become a pastor. With Catherine Cañeda and Madelaine T. Miraña, *Inquirer* Southern Luzon

Comelec decision seen to settle town poll feud

BAGUALAMI, PAMPANGA—THE wrestling standoff between two politicians claiming the mayoral post here eased on Monday as both agreed to designate the town's treasurer as officer in charge (OIC) of the local government until Wednesday.

Mayor Lyndon Gonzales and Romulo Fernandez, the most proclaimed mayor, have endorsed Imelda Sengson Jr. as OIC mayor in a deal brokered by Justina Castillo-Go, Comelec Luzon director of the Department of the Interior and Local Governance, and Soraya Sapi, Ruth Singian, Pampanga provincial director.

The agreement was reached on the eve of President Macapagal-Arroyo's visit to Pampanga for the soft opening of the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway, some 20 km west of here.

In the first of four dialogues held on Monday, Castillo-Go said Sengson was "acceptable" to the feuding parties.

Sengson, 53, has been in the civil service for 34 years and has worked since 2001 as treasurer of Magalang, a largely agricultural town in the foothills of Mt. Arayat.

Holding office as chief executive for three days, he may go down in the history of this town as an OIC mayor with the shortest stint.

Sengson appeared nervous as he assumed the post at around noon.

In the six-point agreement reached on Monday, Sengson's tasks are limited to signing a P1.1 million worth of check for the delayed salaries and wages of some 300 employees.

His decision will also be confined to approving emergency services and disbursing fuel allowances for the town's garbage trucks.

Cameron and Hizon also agreed not to encroach in each other's turf.

Cameron and his supporters occupy the mayor's office, the entire town hall and the right side of the municipal grounds.

Fernandez and his followers occupy the civil registrar's building and the left side of the grounds.

The agreement did not require them to leave the town hall or its grounds even as Sengson stays OIC.

About 100 policemen have secured the premises.

In what she called a "sensitive issue," Castillo-Go has imposed Wednesday as an ultimatum for both parties to give way and not give the police any reason to resume any of the feuding politicians from the premises.

Cameron has agreed to "peacefully vacate" the post if he failed to get an injunction from the Commission on Elections on basis by noon of Wednesday.

Fernandez has also agreed to leave the post if the Comelec granted Cameron an injunction.

Cameron sought an injunction against the writ of execution issued March 11 by Judge Iris Zenaida Bunes of the Regional Trial Court Branch 26.

Bunes ordered Fernandez to be installed as mayor by a vote of 3M6 votes over Cameron.

Comelec Commissioner Rene Sarmiento on March 8 dismissed as earlier petition for injunction by Cameron who cited "mathematical error" in the computation of the final results. Commissioner Nicodemo Ferrer dissented, saying the ground for the intervention of the Comelec en banc to break the tie.

"We want a peaceful transition so they can resume complete and normal operations and services," Castillo-Go told the hopefuls.

She said the DILG's legal team has not acted on the lawsuits of the electoral case.

"For the good of our constituents," Cameron said on why he agreed to the terms.

"It's in deference to Holy Week and so that the services are not anymore disrupted," Hizon said. Rosette Dupio, *Inquirer* Central Luzon

Negrenses bury governor

BACOLOD CITY—ABOUT 20,000 Negrenses gathered in Sagay City to bid their final goodbyes to Gov. Joseph Marañon who was laid to rest yesterday morning.

Army helicopters dropped flower petals as the ship-to-house cortege was buried at his family cemetery in Barangay Old, Sagay City.

Negros Occidental Gov. Isidro Zayco carried over the Philippine flag placed on top of Marañon's coffin to the widow, Alda Marañon, after a 21-gun salute and the playing of the Taps.

In a consolidated funeral Mass, San Carlos Bishop Jose Advincula said the Mass was a thanksgiving for a man who dedicated his life to service for the people.

Marañon died on Thursday after succumbing to a lingering liver illness. Carlo B. Montes, *Inquirer* Visayas

Partially blind vendor reads 'pasyon' for over 50 years now

SAN PABLO CITY—PEDDLING candies did not have lights on it. "Cinta" Margarita Felipe's sole means of livelihood since her husband left her only about a year after their marriage, when she was just 20 years old.

Now 78, Cinta continues to walk at least 7 kilometers daily to sell candies for food. The peddling would only stop as Ash Wednesday ushers in Lent as Cinta would concentrate on the "Pahayag ng Diyosa" (Reading of the Promises of Christ) for fellow residents in her neighborhood in Barangay San Francisco.

The Lenten devotion consists of chanting, in a unique pattern, long narratives about Christ's passion that includes His persecution, trial, death and crucifixion.

Reading from a booklet written in the vernacular, the chanting or reading of the narratives by a group of volunteers at varying ages usually takes 12 to 24 hours to complete.

Catholic Church members say the "pahayag" either starts from 7 a.m up to 12 midnight or from midnight until 12 noon or later in the afternoon.

A household hosting the pahayag makes it a point to end the readings at 3 p.m. on Good Friday when Christ is deemed to be in the throes of death.

Affected by a strange disease that caused her partial blindness at the age of nine, Cinta dropped out of school just when she had entered Grade 1.

At 13, she started to join the pahayag held in their house every Lenten season and when she was 27, Cinta started joining groups that read in various houses outside of her home, which meant visiting different households in other barrios.

THE OCAMPO couple (standing) of Barangay San Gabriel, San Pablo City has been sponsoring the pahayas for 35 years now. BONGOY SANTOS

"My father challenged me to ignore all the negative sentiments and encouraged me to proceed with my devotion. He said I was better than those people doubting me, because I could read and sing the pahayas better than they could."

Cinta says doing the pahayas is pure service and sacrifice on her part. The sacrifices became greater when she began feeding after lunch on Holy Thursday until shortly before Easter Sunday. She only drinks water during breaks. "By God's grace I have even managed to get stronger," she says.

Here is a strong belief that along with devout prayers, her sacrifices in doing the pahayas each Lenten season would pay off and her intentions of enjoying good health and regaining her eyesight would be granted.

Bernadeth Pontay, *Inquirer* Southern Luzon

GRACE GALINDEZ-GUPANA, Christian Businesswoman Reaps 7 Guinness World Records 1st in ASIA

On March 15, 2008, a day before the 487th commemoration of Ferdinand Magellan's "discovery" of the Philippines, Filipina businesswoman, Grace Galindez-Gupana garnered a historic honor for her country when she became the first in Asia to receive a total of (7) awards from Guinness World Records, the world's ultimate authority on record-breaking achievements.

Last year, Ms. Gupana topped her first two (2) Guinnesses in 90 days for making the **largest flag in the world** – that of Israel – and the **world's biggest banner** called the 777 Marker's banner, comprising large-scale flags of the Philippines, Israel, South and North Korea. Both were embarked in Masada, Israel near the Dead Sea on November 25 and December 25, 2007 respectively.

Last Saturday, March 15, Ms. Gupana racked up five (5) more entries in her ever-growing list:

1. **LONGEST DRAWING (5 kilometers and 7 meters) of a serpent, dragon and a beast with 10 horns representing Lucifer-Satan and antichrist in the Book of Revelation. These were burned after which the LARGEST 10 COMMANDMENTS TABLET in the world ever was unveiled (200 x 300).**
2. **LARGEST BLOOD PRESSURE CHECK (2,382 people)**
3. **LARGEST DIABETES SCREENING (985 people)**
4. **LARGEST BLOOD IDENTIFICATION (2,60 people)**
5. **LARGEST CHOLESTEROL TEST (527 people)**

Mr. Marco Frigatti, Guinness' Head of Records Management personally adjudicated the entries and presented the awards to Ms. Gupana at the Hallelujah Prayer Mountain in Patong Bacoor, San Mateo, Rizal.

Ms. Gupana is the Vice President/CEO of **ABS Gen Herbs International Corp.**, a Filipino company which is an acknowledged leader in natural herbs, established in 1998 and headed by her husband, Fiel as President.

PASSION TO OBEY GOD'S COMMANDS

While the Christian businesswoman is most grateful for Guinness' recognition, she is quick to clarify that " I am not here this for personal fame. I am simply obeying God's instruction as I pursue my ministry in the marketplace to help fulfill God's destiny for our country and other nations."

She explains that these God-led projects were the fruit of her obedience to a series of commands that came upon her and her intercessors. It all started in 2005 when, in an episode of lightning and thunder at the PG Prayer Tower in Quezon City, God gave His instruction about His laws:

Grace, Grace, Grace, listen unto My voice, I am who I am, the beginning and the end. Know the truth and the truth shall set you free.

1. *Thou shall have no other Gods before Me.*
2. *Thou shall not make unto thee any graven images, do not vow down to them nor serve them.*
3. *Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.*
4. *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.*
5. *Honor thy father and thy mother.*
6. *Thou Shall not murder.*
7. *Thou shall not commit adultery.*
8. *Thou shall not steal.*
9. *Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*
10. *Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's house nor his servants nor his ox, nor his anything that is thy neighbor's.*

"ARISE, SHINE FOR YOUR LIGHT HAS COME AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD HAS RISEN UPON YOU."

***"PHILIPPINES, PHILIPPINES, PHILIPPINES:** Return to Me now. You know My words and commands but you continue to disobey. Act now, My chosen ones and go spread My word for the redemption of the world. Go forth, go forth! It is your destiny. Call up a signal, raise My banner against the walls of Babylon. Be a strong watchman, place armies to ambush for it is My purpose and I will perform what I spoke concerning the inhabitants of Babylon. You are My war-club Filipinos – My weapon of war. With you, I shatter nations. With you I destroy kingdoms. Tell the whole world of My salvation. ... I Am who I Am, the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and Omega, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Jehveh is My Name, the Great I Am, Your Creator."*

She and her project-intercessors seriously took the word as an urgent directive to spur and call on peoples to obey His commands especially His Second Commandment – *"Thou shall not make unto thee any graven images, thou shall not bow, worship or serve them for I am a jealous God, punishing the sin of fathers to the third and fourth generations."*

7 MAJOR CURSES BECAUSE OF IDOLATRY AND DISOBEDIENCE

Ms. Gupana points out that the unending crises, natural disasters, political unrest and other serious problems besetting our country today can be traced back to the seven curses of idolatry in the Bible, namely:

1) **DEATH** (Joshua 1:18); 2) **POVERTY, FAMINE** and **DROUGHT** (Jeremiah 34:17); 3) **BONDAGE** and **DISEASES** (Deuteronomy 28:27, 29); 4) **WAR** and **TERROR** (Jeremiah 4); 5) **OPPRESSION** and **DEPRESSION** (Psalms 119:134); 6) **DESTRUCTION** (Deuteronomy 6:28); 7) **DISPERSION** and **DIVISION** (Nehemiah 1:8)

THE AWARDS' SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

Ms. Gupana said the symbolic burning of the **Drawings** and the construction of the **Tablet** were a revelation from Malachi 4: 1-6 in the Old Testament:

"For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze," says the LORD of hosts, "so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.

"But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall. You will tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day which I am preparing, says the LORD of hosts.

"Remember the law of Moses My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel. Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse."

The drawings were burned at the base of the 10 Commandments' tablets as a symbolic and prophetic gesture of God's people reconfessing Christ's victory by crushing the serpent's head and destroying the devil's works such as corruption, pornography, perversions, etc.

It also signified the establishing of Christ' lordship over all areas of life – families, economy, government, business, education, media and entertainment, arts and sciences and others.

- The **10 Commandments Tablet** is a powerful prophetic proclamation to Filipinos and all peoples of every land to obey God's laws as a condition to receiving and enjoying His full Blessings through salvation in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The medical tests and screenings (which were done in cooperation with the Philippine National Red Cross, Quezon City chapter) are in consonance with ABS Herbs' vision to advocate the kingdom business of God in natural herbs as instruments for physical healing declared by the prophet Ezekiel in the Old Testament, *"... trees will provide food and their leaves will be used for healing people.* (Ezekiel 47: 12).

HEALING LIFE, HEALING THE NATIONS: ABS Bitter Herbs

Know the truth and the truth will set you free! ABS Bitter Herbs is a Bible revelation for physical health resulting from the healing of sicknesses and diseases.

"Fruit trees of all kinds... their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing... The same night they are to eat the meat... along with bitter herbs... Passover meal.... they are to eat the lamb, together with unleavened bread and bitter herbs... He has filled me with bitter herbs and saturated me with gall.

"Then God said "I give you every seed-bearing plant... and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food."

"On each side of the river stood the tree of life... And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." (Ezekiel 47:12; Exodus 12:8; Numbers 9:11; Lamentations 3:15; Genesis 1:2-29; Revelation 22:2)

POWERFUL PRODUCTS

ABS Gen Herbs now have selling products available in Mercury and Watson's drugstores, SM supermarket and leading mom-n-pop stores. **ABS 7 Bitter Herbs** (anti-diabetes, arthritis, asthma, cancer), **ABS Kalsorino** (Tree cholesterol), **ABS Xanthonamax** (Forte mangosteen), the source of fruits (anti-oxidant anti-cancer), **ABS Pau d arco** (immune system booster), **ABS Herbal Tea** (slimming), **ABS Cherokee Angelica Tea** (anti-diabetes), **ABS Lagundi Tea** (cough and fever), **ABS Sambong Tea** (kidney support) and **Grace Virgin Coconut Oil.**

ABS Herbs' partnership with Natasha, the country's largest direct selling company has further reinforced its leadership status in the market.

Several herbal companies and numerous herbal products have come, some have stayed and we are doing business for many years gone. We thank God who is forever behind our success endeavor, **ABS Gen Herbs** remains strong and resilient, faithfully fulfilling its mandate to bring better life and healing to people and the nations.

All by His rich grace! To God be the glory!

Mr. MARCO FRIGATTI, Head of Guinness Records Management/Caretaker, hands **7 awards to Ms. Grace Galindez-Gupana,** on her right CFO, Lorenzo of PG Hallowed Prayer Mountain, San Mateo, Rizal.

Ms. Grace Galindez-Gupana, Founder/President of Nations Alert Prophetic Global (PG) Foundation, Inc. commissioned by God to build **THE LARGEST TEN COMMANDMENTS** Tablet in the world unveiled at the HALLELUYA Prayer Mountain for All Nations, San Mateo, Rizal, witnessed by the Guinness World Records Head Mr. Marco Frigatti.

ABS 7 Bitter Herbs Capsule. Healing Life. Healing the Nations. Health and Wellness Campaign. More than 3,000 thousand people gathered at the Halleluyah Prayer Mountain for All Nations last year to witness ABS 7 Bitter Herbs capsules, ABS-CBN shows 777 Marking and unveiling of also ABS T-shirt with World Guinness Record logo.

GOD, ABOVE ALL POWER: THE COMPANY

ABS Gen Herbs International Corporation is a leader in the development and marketing of natural herbal dietary food supplements of the highest standards. Since its birth 10 years ago, it has made a glorious mark in the herbal industry with the introduction of Chaneges, *ampalaya* in capsule form, the first-ever product of its type to be certified by the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD).

In 2001, the company introduced **ABS 7 Bitter Herbs**, an innovative herbal product that combined seven highly nutritious and health-giving vegetables and herbs in a capsule. ABS 7 Bitter Herbs capsule has been a widely used food supplement for people with diabetes, hypertension, asthma, arthritis and cancer.

In the clinical study conducted in 2002 by Jonathan G. Valdez, MD, MPH, FPCP, and Adora Camagay-Lo, an avowed diabetic, it was shown that ABS Bitter Herbs can be a safe and effective alternative for the treatment of diabetes because it is purely natural, non-carcinogenic, and has the least side effects.

ABS Gen Herbs International Corp. and Philherbs Nutraceuticals Laboratories, Inc. as sister company has also carved its breakthrough niche in the herbal medicine landscape internationally. Among the proofs are several awards from distinguished government and non-government organizations here and abroad:

- Certification from NSF International USA given on June 15, 2004 as GMP Accreditation Certificate Expires: California, USA to ABS Bitter Herbs, the first herbal supplement in Southeast Asia to be given such prestigious recognition.
- Rising Star/Golden Shell Award for Excellence in Exports awarded by the Philippine Department of Trade.
- Super Brand status awarded to ABS Herbal Herbs in 2005 and 2006.
- Asian Entrepreneur Awards: Business Owners Section for its Herbal Product ABS Herbal Tea as the Number One Herbal Tea Brand in the Philippines in 2004.

ABS Gen Herbs' prestigious endorsers include: Popular singer Gary Valenciano, Former Senator and Health Secretary Dr. Juan Flavier and veteran UMAC General 7 Brigadier Gen. Felipino and more to stay tuned! Contact for ABS Herbal Marketing Tie.

The outreach Ministry program of ABS Gen Herbs Int'l Corp. is the Nations FAR Prophetic Global (PG) Foundation, Inc., an instrument by God to raise His Kingdom Standard on earth as it is in heaven. Glory to God Alone!

www.abs-herbs.com.ph
www.halleluyahpg.com

In every purchase of ABS Herbs products you will be treated BIBLICALLY and become an instrument in spreading the word and love of God.

Agri chief: There is no rice shortage, no food crisis

By Amy R. Remo

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY Arthur C. Yap has downplayed fears of a rice shortage, saying Filipinos can expect enough supplies of rice and other commodities this year.

"There is no shortage, no looked entries. We have supply (for the country) that will last until the time of 2,000 metric tons (MT)," Yap said in an interview with the Inquirer.

As of Feb. 1, the country was assured to keep its total rice stocks at 1.05 million tons, enough to last for 107 days.

In a matter of policy, the National Food Authority maintains, at any given time, an inventory equivalent to 15 days of national consumption. A 30-day buffer stock is required during the lean months from July to September.

Tight supply

Yap, however, acknowledged that there was "tight supply in the global market," which has been responsible for the high prices of commodities such as rice, tallow and resin.

"The fact that the prices of rice are going up is a sign that there is just enough supply; a tight supply but it does not mean an absence of rice stocks in the market," he said. "If you go to supermarkets and palengkes (wet markets) you'll see there are enough stocks for people to buy."

Yap said in an earlier briefing that there was a slim difference of 100,000 MT between the global supply, which is estimated at 123.3 million MT, and global demand of 123.2 million MT.

Rationing

He said he did not see the situation getting out of hand, saying "there will be no need for rationing."

Despite this tight supply in the global market, Yap said he was confident that the Philippines would be able to get the country's planned importation volume of 2.1 million MT.

For 2004, the Department of Agriculture targets rice production to reach a record 17.33 million tons, equivalent to a national self-sufficiency level of 92 percent.

A coalition of mungoveron ment group slammed Yap for failing to curb increases in rice prices and for forcing an "importation only" policy.

The Bantay Watch and Action Network (BAN) issued the statement following reports that Yap was willing to lower the tariff on imported rice and corn to increase the flow of these cereals to the country.

"Yap should stop boasting of increased productivity while holding out staple food shortage to volatile fluctuations in international markets," said BAN coordinator Jessica Reyes Centeno.

She said "local agricultural officials are turning to imports to solve the alleged shortage of rice, while [Trade] Secretary Angelo Reyes and rice" for increased protection through quantitative restrictions for rice imports in the World Trade Organization."

Philippine agriculture negotiators vis-a-vis the WTO is likely to save more negotiating for increased protection for rice and other sensitive products under the Special Products and Special Safeguards Mechanism.

"Tariff is not used in ging shortages that are deemed temporary unless he admits that the country will rely on imports to feed its people," Centeno said.

SL Agritech

Government needs to get its act together to Strengthening Management And Rice Program Director Prisco Malabanan has boasted of solving the rice shortage through hybrid rice, according to Centeno.

The BAN analyst criticized the agriculture department for subsidizing the hybrid rice seeds of a single company, SL Agritech, to encourage the farmers to use the seeds for planting with the promised potential of increase in harvest.

The policy analyst said Yap should investigate the abnormal increase in local rice prices so early in January when the harvest season started.

"Yap should really start to learn the ropes of running an agricultural portfolio with a coherent and policy based on land self-sufficiency. We challenge him to sit down for an honest-to-goodness discussion on the rice master plan instead of resorting to knee-jerk reactions," Centeno said.

Fast-food outlets told to cut rice serving

From page A1

The Department of Agriculture has warned of a new deficit of 2.1 million tons, equivalent to almost two months' worth of consumption, this year, according to Sen. Edgardo Angara III.

"It's safe to say that we have enough supply of rice from January to October this year. Come November, where will we get our supply from? And that's a big concern for us. We cannot depend anymore on other countries' exports," Reyes, chair of the Senate committee on trade and commerce, said yesterday.

Calling for early action, Reyes urged Malacañang to release stimulus funds to local governments' units so they can minimize the impending shortage.

No shortage yet

Global commodity prices, including those of rice, have started to record levels for the following reasons:

- Growing affluence and changing diets in developing countries, resulting in higher demand for food.
- Oil price increases, which are affecting agriculture through the cost of irrigation and petroleum-based fertilizers.
- Supply disruptions like floods.
- Stagnating output.
- Higher prices of inputs like beef diesel.
- Funds flowing into commodities as a hedge against a weak US dollar and falling stock markets.

Yap said the Philippines, where rising harvests could not keep pace with population growth of three billion a minute, was not facing a shortage of its national staple but people should conserve the grain, which is eaten at breakfast, lunch and dinner. (The story echoes.)

If Filipinos could be more prudent with their consumption, rice imports could go down by 37 percent to 1.25 million tons compared with last year's import requirement of 1.67 million tons, according to the Department of Agriculture.

Old saying

Other senators are blaming President Macapagal-Arroyo for the looming rice crisis and for making the Philippines the world's biggest importer of the cereal.

"Remember the old saying—Magmahal at magkulang na lahat, dyanag lang bigas (Everything may cost more and suffer shortages but not rice)," Sen. Panfilo Escudero said in a text message.

He said the rice crisis should be addressed and taken seriously by the government.

"The sure cause is rice only en-

Wholesale prices of rice 2001 to 2003 (pesos per kilogram)

	Palay	Premium	Well-milled	Regular-milled
2001	12.18	20.03	17.17	15.80
2002	13.19	21.19	18.15	16.82
2003	15.50	23.08	19.90	18.57
2004	14.47	21.28	18.11	17.19
2005	11.63	19.13	15.98	14.54
2006	10.45	17.51	15.05	13.68
2007	12.12	20.08	17.16	16.06
2008 (Feb.)	18.80	28.58	25.06	23.80

SOURCE: BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

tered double because related to the supply and demand of imports, absence of logistics, absence or lack of harvest planning, and the shift to corn and pandesal.

Senators noted that the government's failure to promote jatropha in support of the biofuel program could have diverted funds intended for rice development to oil seed varieties.

Rice cartel

Senator President Manny Villar said the government had a lot of explaining to do on the rice crisis.

"First, the rice cartel. A lot of people might be taking advantage of the situation. Second, the fertilizer scam in which the government did not cooperate on our part to investigate. Government is aware that obviously before the poor should never be tolerated. If our rice production is low, it is undeniable that we failed to take of the reasons," Villar said in a press conference.

Were the breadbasket scandal

Aside from being ineffective against the rice cartel, the government has been lax in checking corrupt practices in the National Food Authority (NFA), according to Villar.

"With the world price of rice spiraling, the government must do its best in handling the crisis because this could be more serious than the National Breadbasket scandal," he said.

Reyes blamed the NFA for allowing government-bought rice meant to be sold cheaper than commercial rate to get into the hands of unscrupulous rice traders.

He also took to task the agriculture department for failing to secure the country's rice production.

Export prices of rice

	Thai 100% B (Second week)	Viet 5%	U.S. Long grain 2.4%	Viet 15%	Thai 25%
			US$/mt, f.o.b.		
2000	203	196	181	183	178
2001	166	147	157	154	151
2002	159	155	174	170	164
2003	211	199	184	196	190
2004					
Jan	332	316	208	206	206
Feb	270	258	208	205	200
Mar	253	233	198	193	188
Apr	253	233	198	193	188
May	253	233	198	193	188
Jun	250	227	192	194	190
Jul	237	227	192	195	191
Aug	239	227	200	199	195
Sep	237	227	200	199	195
Oct	238	228	202	202	197
Nov	238	228	200	202	198
Dec	238	230	200	202	198
2005					
Jan	250	230	200	202	198
Feb	250	230	200	202	198
Mar	250	230	200	202	198
2006	250	230	200	202	198
Jan-Feb					
2004	426	410	388	410	411
Jan-Feb					

SOURCE: FOODSECURITY.GOV.PH

Lozada runs into trouble with Catholic prelates

From page A1

cused the political rallies," Lagman said when asked in an interview over the Church-run Radio Veritas about the refusal of 300 Cebu priests to say a "Mass for Truth" with Lozada.

The bishop said the use of the Mass for politics only served to degrade the sacrifice of the cross. He said it pained him to see priests, nuns and bishops either being used or allowing themselves to be used to serve political ends.

Lozada was scheduled to visit Cebu on Tuesday but cancelled it and 25 but 10. Mary Ann Manahan, head of the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines, told the Inquirer that the AMRSP had a hard time getting active sisters.

Although this was not the announced reason for the cancellation, Manahan said that the AMRSP had heard that Mrs Inocencio was also set to visit Cebu province. But as the news came.

During a forum yesterday at the University of San Carlos (USC) in Cebu City, Lozada blamed Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal for the boycott of priests of a Mass that he was to attend in the evening.

Lozada called Cebu the "archdiocese of Malacañang." Archbishop Antonio Tobias of the AMRSP and USC Prof. Andy Aguilar had told her that Lozada's schedule in Cebu yesterday included a Mass in the evening.

Asked if she believed Vidal had something to do with the boycott, Gutierrez said only that "something happened somewhere."

"There are based Cardinal Vidal, I have not heard him say this to the priests. But we are feeling the effects of this because we could not find a priest to celebrate Mass," she said.

Gutierrez said she challenged those who had denied Vidal had directed priests not to officiate in a Mass for Lozada to look for one who would do it.

No prevention

"I don't wish to be specific about it because this was said to me in a manner that I could not pass on to other persons. But there was intention in there would no longer be a Mass," Aguilar said.

Msgr. Achilles Oñate, archdiocesan spokesperson, denied that Vidal had issued a boycott order to the Cebu priests. "There was no order. There is no prevention whatever," Oñate said in an interview.

In his 7:30 p.m. speech before an estimated 2,000 crowd at the university, Lozada also discussed on the efforts of his administration before the Senate and the threats he got as a result, including when he described as "spiritual harassment" in Cebu.

He backtracked later in a letter of the Esplanade ng mga Bodabasyo ng Filipinas, saying his statements against Vidal were "joke only."

In Manila, the civil society group Bilis Kilos and Pilipo Movement for Democracy (PMD) condemned the statement and said it was "outraged and dismayed by this unchristian act of the prelate of Cebu."

"There is a difference between critical collaboration, which allows government to exercise state Family while preaching political moderation from the pulpit, and being a puppet of the President," the group said.

Liars

Presidential Management Staff chief Ginge Reyes-Ermita defended Malacañang had a hand in the Cebu priests' boycott of Lozada.

"This is one more proof that Lozada and his camp are liars because that allegation has no basis," Reyes-Ermita said.

Senate President Manny Villar does not believe that Vidal warned Gutierrez not to appear before the Senate while preaching political moderation from the pulpit, and being a puppet of the President," the group said.

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'Pasyon' to go hi-tech videoke style, says doc

From page A1

Christ from failed book pages, a devotee only needs a CD in a player and sings the verses from a TV monitor a superb in a chorus of three men and three women.

"And this is the first time in January to October this year. Come November, where will we get our supply from? And that's a big concern for us. We cannot depend anymore on other countries' exports," Reyes, chair of the Senate committee on trade and commerce, said yesterday.

Calling for early action, Reyes urged Malacañang to release stimulus funds to local governments' units so they can minimize the impending shortage.

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"The sure cause is rice only en-

S-line stanzas

The Pasyon is a poetical narration of the life and sufferings of Jesus Christ. It is composed of four lines with eight syllables each. Communal reading or chanting the verses aloud, accompanied by any musical instrument and taped music, is done during Holy Week in the privacy of one's home or during a religious neighborhood and church tradition.

The melody varies, usually depending on the place's customary condition.

Most devotees take part in Pasyon reading as a form of sacrifice or penitence, for the book must be held continuously until Good Friday.

"Our family couldn't afford to hire such religious activity because we were poor. I feeling was only for the moneyed because of the financial requirements for food and drinks," Fernandez said.

Chorus audition

Sometime in 2005, when he returned for a vacation and invited musicians in Quezon, he discussed the project with his friend, entertainment lawyer Jun Perez. "I saw the one who stands the audition for the Pasyon singers," said Perez, who continued to bring up and chanters, particularly to the Batangas type.

Several choirs auditioned, according to Perez, but the "Ding ng Tipolo" from the Pontifical Depelchin City was chosen because of its upbeat performance. "We don't want melodies that would kill participants in delay," he explained.

Studio-taping lasted for about six months in the studios of Gateway Broadcasting Corp. here.

"The choir sang the Pasyon a cappella style. The recording was not metricalbeat. There were lots of Take 2s during the taping," Perez said.

A hand-video editor was commissioned to put the footage of the record. But Dumalaw rejected his production videos he saw it was back after more than a year.

Suitable footage

"That's the main reason for the delay of the completion of the project—the application of suitable video footage," he said.

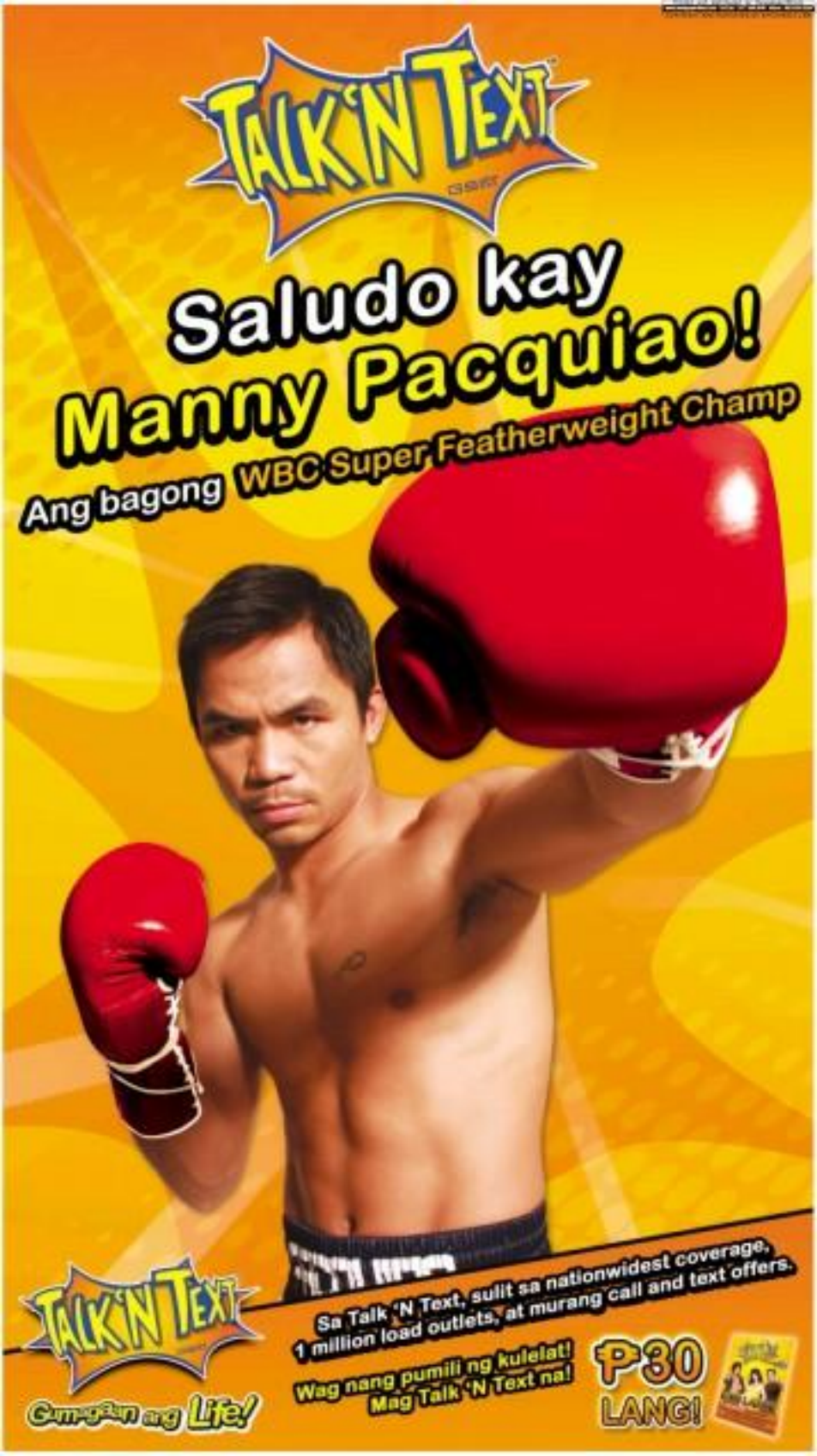
The Filipino-American said he admired the conventional scenery used and preferred to showcase depictions of Calvary, burial and death. "I want footage that are closely related to a scene of a particular verse. I don't want footage that could distract devotees from their spiritual singing," he said.

He said video clips were publicized from different sources, like the Moriones Festival in Marinduque, private video shots and from the Internet. "But I allowed some modifications of the video concepts, if necessary," he said.

Once completed, Pasyonan said the product would be distributed in the Internet for free. "I don't want to commercialize it. I'm not after the money to recover my expenses. I don't think of the money that I have spent for this project. This is a tradition. He will just give it to the people," he said.

He said he would maintain a website where anyone can upload the 26 lines Pasyon in even-packed form or in covered CDs.

He is not particularly concerned with Internet pirates. "Anyways, when I want it on disc, I'll take the best of my patience globally," he said.


TALK 'N TEXT
Saludo kay
Manny Pacquiao!
Ang bagong WBC Super Featherweight Champ
TALK 'N TEXT
Gumagalaw ang Life!
Sa Talk 'N Text, sulit sa nationwidest coverage,
1 million load outlets, at murang call and text offers.
Wag nang pumili ng kulelat!
Mag Talk 'N Text na!
P30
LANG!

Aplus METRO
Editor Ester C. Dipasupil

'Family woes drove him to drugs'

Manila mayor nixes special treatment for son

By Tina G. Santos

MANILA MAYOR ALFREDO LIM SAID HIS son, who was arrested in a police operation last Friday, could have turned to drugs because of family problems.

Mannny Santos Lim, 44, a businessman, was apprehended with nine other men in Sta. Cruz, Manila. One hundred grams of shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) worth P680,000 were found on the three.

The youngest Lim was arrested by PDEA agents after he and his two companions, Joel Subacio and Ronald Mercial, tried to sell shabu to a police agent.

They were charged with violations of the 8 legal drugs law. Selling drugs is a nonbailable offense that carries a life sentence.

"Manny's wife, along with two children, left him," the mayor said of his son. "We have been telling him that drugs aren't solve his problems but he did not listen."

The older Lim said he received phone calls from his ex-wife children who were living overseas.

"They were crying, asking me what I would do, but they know me well enough. They know I don't tolerate any wrongdoing," he stressed. "Since they were young, I have been telling them that they should be responsible for their actions. They cannot count on me to help them if they did something wrong."

The mayor admitted that he and his son have not been on speaking terms for several months.

Lim said he would not rule out his son who is now in the custody of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, adding that he would help out him or send him a lawyer.

"Bottom line, bila mga Lim should take responsibility for himself," the mayor said. "He should face the music and be man enough to face the consequences of his actions."

He added, "That's what happens when you are in bad company."

The mayor, a former police official, was dubbed "Dirty Harry" for his uncompromising stance against crime when he was chief of the National Bureau of Investigation.

During his first stint as mayor of Manila in the 1990s, Lim pursued a relentless campaign against drugs, snubbing the houses of drug suspects with red paint to shame them. He will be remembered for his mantra at the time: "The law applies to all or none at all."

"That remains my philosophy, that's what I've been fighting for. I only help those who are victims of injustice. So if Manny violated the law, let the law fall where it may," he said. "I told PDEA chief Dionisio Santiago to treat my son as an ordinary violator and throw the book at him."

HELPS LIM: His pleas to visit son who was recently arrested for drugs or to provide him with a lawyer

'MMDA can't force ticket scheme on us'

By DJ Yap

MAKATI MAYOR JEJOMAR BINAY YESterday warned Metropolitan Manila Development Authority officials against forcing motorists to buy tickets for traffic violations, saying the agency has no power to do so.

"If the agency administration suspends us, we will definitely file cases against them for harassment, abuse of authority and willful disobedience of the law," he said.

In a statement, he reminded the government that the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, which was tasked to oversee the connective roads, had neither legislative nor police powers.

"The agency has no authority to implement a single ticketing scheme for Metro Manila and it is on this point where Executive Order 772 is flawed," Binay said.

Earlier, the mayor said he had no intention of heeding the order issued to apprehend transport operators against different traffic policies and fines implemented in Metro Manila. Binay said Makati would not suspend its own traffic code and would continue to issue its own traffic tickets.

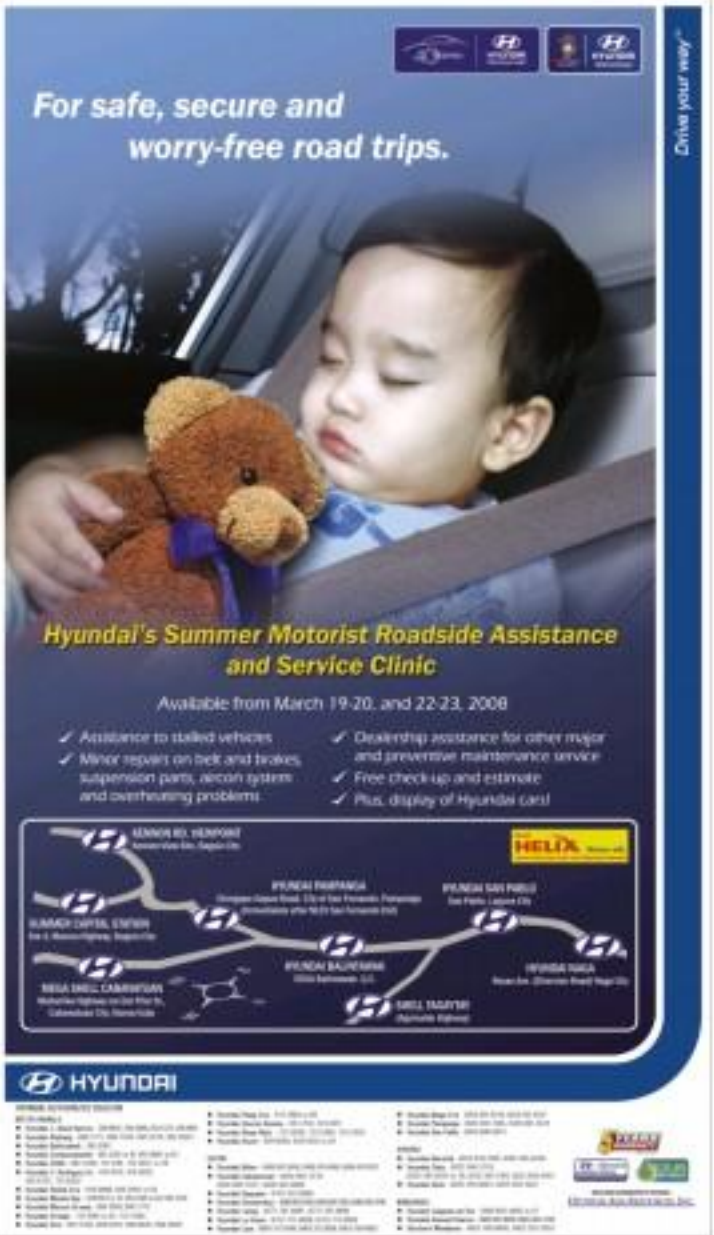
The city of Makati is among the four local governments that have not approved the scheme which seeks to make uniform the system of issuing traffic citation tickets. The others are the cities of Pasay, Taguig, and Navotas.

Last week, transport operators and drivers rolled off their Metro-wide strike after the LTO granted some of their demands, including the implementation of the single ticketing scheme.

DID YOU KNOW

ABOUT 41% (1,000 of Metro Manila's 2.4 million households are renter citizens, according to the latest census. This constitutes 4.7 percent of the population in the metropolis. Southern Tagalog has the highest number of residents, aged 65 and above (about 650,000), while the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao has the lowest (17,000).

Cyril L. Zuzuárregui, Inquirer Research



Security measures in place for Holy Week

By Alexis Pisos, Julie M. Aurelio and Kristine L. Alave

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL Police deployed yesterday some 5,000 more police forces and motorcycle riders to beef up security to Metro Manila as people started leaving for the provinces for Holy Week.

PNP Chief Director General Jesclito Ilarion Jr. said the move was part of their efforts to step up police visibility during the long vacation to make sure that human left empty by vacationing residents would not be burglarized.

"We will guard against burglars, especially members of the Metro Baboy gang, the house of residents of Metro Manila who will leave town," Ilarion said.

Malacañang earlier declared Maundy Thursday and Good Friday as holidays, which means that it would be a four-day weekend for the public.

The police would also guard vital installations, tourist destinations, seaports, airports, bus terminals and other places where people are expected to gather, Ilarion said.

He added that police stations in Metro Manila would be given the primary responsibility of conducting preventive patrols and neighborhood watch to guard against criminals.

Ilarion said he had already ordered a deployment or "domino loading" of 90 percent of PNP personnel in the streets to provide visibility and patrols.

"The 1960 will put in measures to ensure the peace and order not only here in Metro Manila but in places where the public would be taking their vacation," he said.

The 1960 would also set up public assistance booths on major routes to tourist destinations. The booths, he said, would provide police assistance, vehicle emergency and medical assistance and information to local and foreign tourists.

"We are preparing security because not only local tourists will be hunting their vacation but foreigners as well," Ilarion said. The security operations are part of the PNP's "Oplan Bantay Lakbay."

Yesterday, Ilarion led other police officials to an inspection of bus terminals in Quezon City.

Quezon City Police District director, Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula, said that they expect a maximum of 15,000 passengers a day to entrain into bus terminals to catch a ride to their provinces.

National Capital Region Police Office Director Geary Barias said they are implementing "preventive actions" in down criminals like holding mass and

EARLY START
Females of the Philani Life Jail mark the start of Holy Week by holding a "pabasa"—readings and songs about the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ—inside the compound. (Jonas Sa-onoy)

policemen in bus terminals.

In Pasay City, the police will also deploy more men in bus terminals in the city to guard those going home to their provinces.

Supt. Marivic Tolentino, Pasay police chief, said his men would be in charge of assisting passengers and checking their luggage for any dangerous substances or weapons.

"We will have 80 additional cops manning the bus stations in the city beginning Holy Wednesday because that's when we expect the crowds to flock to the terminals," he said in a phone interview.

The deployment will concentrate mainly on the bus terminals in the Edsa Rotonda area and at the corner of Taft Avenue and Tell Payat.

The Eastern Police District will likewise send out more men in the streets, particularly in crowdy commercial areas, to guard against criminals who may break into empty houses.

4 cops accused of taking ₱345,000 from businesswoman

By Marlon Ramos

FOUR QUEZON CITY POLICEMEN were relieved from active duty yesterday after they were accused of taking P345,000 from a businesswoman whom they reportedly arrested at a checkpoint in Baltimore, Quezon City last week.

Supt. Christopher Morco, chief of QCPD Kamuning Police Station, said he immediately ordered the relief of his men pending an investigation of the incident.

The four, whom Morco refused to identify, would be confined to quarters in Camp Karingal in Diliman, Quezon City. Morco said there was "strong documentary evidence" against the four.

"We will severe all our ties with police officers who use their authority to take advantage of the people. Definitely, we will not tolerate this," he told the reporters.

In her complaint, Cecilia Custodio, 32, a businesswoman, identified a police team named "Bacani" as among those who took her money.

Morco confirmed that one of those relieved was a certain PO1 Bacani.

Custodio, a cell phone shop owner from Malabon, said she was in a convoy together with Melvin Cruz and Antriel Bermoso at around 1 a.m. last March 12 when they were stopped by a police car near the bridge in Camarin, Kaloocan Balintawak.

Cruz said four men in police uniforms alighted from the patrol car and told them to get down from the van.

"The police officers searched our pockets and bags as if they were looking for something. They said it was just a checkpoint," Cruz said.

The police officers were unarmed, he added.

But when they received the plastic bag containing the money inside Custodio's handbag, they wanted assuming the victim, he said.

Cruz claimed one of the policemen said the money came from a drug deal. The policemen did not believe him when he said they were legitimate cell phone traders and that they were going to use the money to buy mobile phones from their supplier in Baclaran, he added.

Cruz said the four told them that they would be brought to a nearby police station.

Four instead of doing so, Cruz said the policemen drove them around and continued to harass them inside the police car for at least one hour.

He said the four then dropped them off on O. Mariano Road in La Loma, taking with them Custodio's P345,000.

Ordinance seeking protection for QC seniors up for approval

By Jeannette I. Andrade

EMPHASIZING THAT CASES OF abuse do not involve only women and children, a Quezon City councilor has proposed an ordinance seeking to protect senior citizens.

Councilor Jesus Manuel Suntay's "Anti-Elderly Abuse Ordinance" aims to establish a multisectoral monitoring program for the elderly although he admitted that cases of senior citizens being abused are "severely underreported."

Violators of the ordinance through neglect, abandonment, sexual assault, or harassment, economic abuse, and domestic violence would receive a P1,000 fine for first time offenders, P2,000 for the second time and P5,000 for the third offense.

Under the proposed ordinance, the Social Services and Development Department (SSDD), the Office of the Senior Citizens Affairs (Osca) and other nongovernment agencies should establish outreach, support and counseling programs for elderly victims of abuse.

The agencies will also be involved in establishing centers for senior citizens, nursing homes and other similar facilities.

"Public and professional awareness and identification of elderly abuse is difficult because older persons are not linked to many social networks such as schools, jobs and other institutions outside their family, which can increase the risk of abuse," Suntay noted in his proposed ordinance.

He added, "Elderly abuse is a severely underreported because some older persons, particularly women, fail to report it because of shame, privacy concerns, or as a result of prior unsatisfactory experience."

Apart from providing protection for the elderly, the ordinance seeks to create an "Elderly Ordinance Board" to be composed of representatives from the city's SSDD, the Osca, the Federation of Senior Citizens of the Philippines, the Public Assistance and Legal Office, the chair of the committee on social services and other concerned agencies.

An abusive police chief

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

SENATE STAR WITNESS JUN LOzada cites prosecution from President Gloria's government that he has exposed the alleged Hacienda corruption.

I sympathize with Lozada.

But he should have known the consequences of fighting this government that is shameless, vindictive and ruthless.

"Bahlikan" because it has no scruples about using the powers of the executive branch to persecute its enemies.

It uses military intelligence, the National Bureau of Investigation, the Philippine National Police, the Department of Justice, the House of Representatives Committee on Justice, the Office of the Senior Citizens Affairs (Osca) and other nongovernment agencies should establish outreach, support and counseling programs for elderly victims of abuse.

et. There is such a thing as karma. What goes around comes around. One reaps what he sows.

So, hold it there, Jun, and stop being a cry baby!

* * *

Army Sgt. Noel Moong complained to me he has not been compensated for the leg and head injuries he suffered in an accident involving the son of singer Gary Valenciano.

Moong said he and his companions were treated at the Makati Medical Center and the bill was paid for by the elder Valenciano.

But what about the companion time for damages from the Valenciano?

Moong said he said his fellow Army soldiers received none.

"We only got P1,000 for last June it wasn't enough."

Sh. Valenciano, have pity on the poor soldiers!

* * *

The Puerto Princesa City police chief, Supt. Rodjun Ancheta, only three months in his new assignment, shows folks what's the boss.

Ancheta, who came from the Manila police, cuts the hair of youngsters arrested for vagrancy. Some boys in costume their marriage when they go to the police station, and some hit a motorcycle rider with his own helmet on the head.

The 38-year-old former body guard of evangelist Eddie Villanueva also cuts Noynoy Aquino supporters and "plants" weapons on crime suspects, according to people who complained to this writer.

Ancheta allegedly doesn't report the earnings with his superior, former Supt. Bonnie Pelta, Palawan provincial director.

He probably thinks he is only answerable to the head of the Jesus Is Lord Church who recommended him for the post.

MetroBriefs

Ex-player charged

ABUEVA MUM? Two players and two companions are facing theft charges after they broke into the Blue Thai gym at dawn yesterday and stole some of the refreshments members' personal belongings. PO2 Lendy Ignacio said suspects Marcelino Abuda, 28, and Cleman Gloria, 28, were detained at the Pasay City police station after investigators found out that they stole a pair of gloves, a gasoline player, and running shoes from Blues. The player Warren Abueva is a member of Letran Knights team. According to Ignacio, Abuda and Gloria broke into the National Blues Thai Taekwondo and formerly located at the Pinagpala Arena in Pasay City while the team was asleep. As the suspects were walking outside the stadium, members of the Barangay Frontline security force spotted them and asked for their identification. The two were later brought to the barangay hall where they underwent questioning. There, village officials interrogated the suspects about their belongings. According to the suspects, they each confessed things given to them by Mayo That members. Upon verification, it was discovered that the two had stolen the items.

Kristine L. Alave

Inquirer Read-Along reset

INQUIRER NIE is the observance of Holy Week, there will be no Inquirer Read-Along session on Saturday, March 23 & 30 a.m., at the Inquirer office on Chino Roces Avenue in Makati City. Moderators, formerly quiz-type TV host Alvin Gallevo and Yeng Constantino, 2008 grand winner of the ASAP-ONE reality talent search. "Pinoy Dream Academy," are the featured members along with an Philippine idols Jeffer. Interested parties may call Glen Capanzo or Gene Arellano at 7867888, local 3278. Those interested in donating books to the program, including a Read-Along session updates or bookings Read-Along session in their area may send an e-mail to inquirerreadalong@inquirer.com.ph.

Germany's Merkel confronts Nazi, Holocaust history in Israel visit

JERUSALEM – GERMAN CHANCELLOR Angela Merkel on Sunday acknowledged her country's "historical responsibility" to Israel as she opened a three-day visit marking the 60th anniversary of the Jewish state.

The visit, which includes a stop at Israel's official Holocaust memorial and an address to parliament, reflects the warm ties that have developed since Israel gained statehood in the wake of the killing of 6 million Jews by the Nazis.

Though six decades have passed since the end of World War II, a state visit by a German leader is a highly emotional event for the Jewish state. About 200,000 aged survivors of the Holocaust live in Israel, and the memory of the attempt by Adolf Hitler to systematically wipe out the Jews of Europe still reverberates though Israel's political and social life.

At least one member of the Israeli parliament will absent himself when Merkel speaks at Israel's parliament, the Knesset, on Monday. The lawmaker, says Uzbad, said he would not listen to the German language in that setting.

Many Holocaust survivors and their descendants refuse to buy German-made products, and performances of the music of Nazi favorite Richard Wagner are kept off stages and airwaves. At the same time, Germany has emerged as one of Israel's staunchest political allies and trading partners in Europe, and Israel has made use of German mediation in winning freedom for captured soldiers.

Germany is a main contributor to the international force deployed in south Lebanon after Israel's 2006 war with Hezbollah guerrillas and is involved in moves to free two Israeli soldiers whose capture led to the 34-day conflict.

GERMAN Chancellor Angela Merkel lights the eternal flame, commemorating the 06 million Jews killed by the Nazis in the Holocaust, during her visit in Jerusalem on March 17. AP PHOTO

Greeted with a full ceremony at Israel's airport Sunday afternoon, in the presence of Israel's prime minister and most of his Cabinet, Merkel said that during her visit, "we will discuss Germany's historical responsibility" as well as future projects "to make the world a better place," according to a translation of her remarks.

Merkel also pledged to work for Mideast peace, blaming the "threat against Israel in the course of the past 60 years," she hoped to work toward "a two-state solution: one state for the Jews, the state of Israel, and the other for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza."

Merkel arrives at a time of heightened tensions between Israel and the Palestinians, whose joint goal of reaching a peace agreement by the end of the year has been compromised by resurgent violence and Israel's construction on lands the Palestinians claim for a future state. Peace efforts are expected to figure high on her agenda, though the chancellor will not be meeting with Palestinian leaders during her visit.

German Embassy spokesperson Albert Graf said Merkel's visit was exclusively related because it was designed to mark Israel's 60th anniversary of independence and the inauguration of a new branch of bi-national ties between Cabinet members from the two countries.

Palestinian Foreign Minister Riad Malki said Merkel would soon pay a "special visit" to the West Bank to discuss German support for the Palestinian. Germany is a major donor to the Palestinian Authority, headed by moderate Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

Accompanying Merkel are seven Cabinet ministers and a delegation of German businessmen. She is meeting Olmert, President Shimon Peres and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni during her trip. AP

WORLDBRIEFS

Alitalia takes offer for buyout

PARIS— The board of Alitalia, the money-losing Italian airline, accepted a 1.02 million euro takeover offer from Air France-KLM on Sunday, solving a financial lifeline at the 11th hour after months of political indecision and labor resistance. After a meeting that began Saturday and lasted more than 10 hours, Alitalia's board issued a statement shortly after midnight announcing its unanimous approval of the offer. The $1.11 billion deal already approval from the Italian government – which owns 49.9 percent of the airline's shares – as well as national and European Union regulators.

AFP

Salmon vanish in US West Coast

GAZZAMBITO— The Chinook salmon that swim upstream to spawn in the fall, the most robust run in the Sacramento River, have gone missing. The almost complete collapse of the valued and most dependable source of Chinook salmon south of Alaska left gloomy fishermen aspiring struggling for reliable explanations – and coming up dry. Whatever the cause, there was widespread agreement among those attending a five-day meeting of the Pacific Fisheries Management Council here last week that the broader $130 million coastal fishery, which usually opens for the four-month season on May 1, is almost certain to remain closed this year from northern Oregon to the Mexican border. As a result, Oregon, or sing salmon, the most prized species of Pacific wild salmon, will be hard to come by until the fishing season opens in July.

AFP

Sarkozy 'punished' in French local polls

PARIS— Nicolas Sarkozy's right-wing party suffered losses in French local elections Sunday, poll projections showed, in what the opposition Socialists hailed a "punishment vote" for the embattled president. However, the first major test of Sarkozy's popularity since he defeated the Socialist Segolene Royal last May was seen as a referendum on the achievements of a president whose opinion poll ratings have plummeted. The Socialists were often across the country including Strasbourg, Toulouse and the right-wing bastions of Amiens, Caen and Reims after the final round of the vote, projections by Ipsos-Sofres/TNS Sofres said. The left was already guaranteed Paris and the third biggest city Lyon after last weekend's first round.

AFP

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DOLE NCR Building, 3601 Taft Avenue, Pasay City

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATIONS FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMITS (AEP/S)

Pursuant to Sunday guidelines that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits.

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Nationality	Position
FIRST EAST CHEMICALS, INC.		
INFOSYS BPO LIMITED – PHIL. BRANCH		
LEIGHTON CONTRACTORS (ASIA) LIMITED		
MEGA ENGLISH TUTORING CORP.		
TASEC PHIL. CONSTRUCTION INC.		
WESTERN PACIFIC CORPORATION		
PAT LANDING INVESTOR CORPORATION		
PAT LANDING INVESTOR CORPORATION		
ACCESSTEC INC.		
CHINA STATE PHILCONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING CORPORATION		
H BEAUTY INNOVATIONS, INC.		
I-CLOUD COMPANY, INC.		
MARUBENI CORPORATION REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE		
TEC TUNNEL INC.		
TOP TECHNICAL SUPPLY INC.		
"I" LINE AIR SERVICE PHILS., INC.		

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned applications please communicate with this Regional Office.

ATTY. ALEJANDRO S. ARAMBULO III
OIC, Regional Director

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
Division of Caloocan City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Lot	Description	ABC	ABC (Php)
1			
2			

Item	Activity	Date and Time	Venue
1			
2			
3			

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Iloilo
Office of the Governor
CITY OF ILOILO AND ADJACENT AREAS

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid
Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
Regional Hospital Antique (RHA)
IAEB-2008-4-(3-LS)

Industrial Equipment; Lifting Equipment; Electricals Computers; Office Furniture & Equipment; Restaurant Equipment; Misc.

LIVE AUCTION

Go Industry

www.goindustry.com

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Leyte II Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Real Street, Sagkahan District, Tacloban City
Tel. Nos. (053) 321-1491, 321-2630
Telefax No. (053) 325-7199
Email Address: leyeco2@yahoomail.com

-oOo-

PRE-BIDS & AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The Leyte II Electric Cooperative, Inc. (LEYECO II) invites suppliers to pre-qualify and bid for the supply of the following items:

1. Various Line Hardwares
2. KVA-HI Meters
3. Wires and Conductors

A pre-qualification of bidder conference will be held on March 25, 2008 at the Leyeco II Conference Room, LEYECO II New Office Building, Real Street, Sagkahan, Tacloban City at 9:00 in the morning. The following documents have to be presented, to wit:

a) Letter of Intent
b) Original / certified True Copy of Supplier's License / Accreditation
c) Business Permit
d) SEC Registration
e) Certified True Copy of the Latest Audited Financial Statement and Latest Income Tax Return (Audited)
f) Certification of Availability

Bidding documents and detailed technical specifications shall be issued to pre-qualified bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee of ONE THOUSAND PESOS (P1,000.00). Time and venue of the opening of bids shall be discussed during the pre-bid conference. Sealed offers must be accompanied by a bid bond equivalent to 5% of the total bid offered.

LEYECO II reserves the right to reject any and all bids, to waive any formality thereof and to accept only such bids that are advantageous to the cooperative. The decision of the cooperative is final and binding.

(Sgd.) MS. AGNES G. VELEZEO
PBAC Chairman

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Ilanes

China denies using deadly force in Tibet

BEIJING—CHINA ON MONDAY WARNED Tibetans involved in anti-Chinese protests to quickly surrender and insisted it had not used deadly force in quelling the unrest, blaming rioters for murdering 13 people.

"They either burned or hacked to death 13 innocent civilians," Tibet government chief Qiangba Puncog said in Beijing as he gave the first detailed official account of the protests in the region's capital, Lhasa.

Amid international calls for China to show restraint, and reported threats from some athletes that they may boycott the Beijing Olympics over the unrest, Qiangba sought to portray the Chinese response as restrained.

"Throughout the process, [security forces] did not carry or use any lethal weapons," he said.

"I can tell you as a responsible official that guns were absolutely not fired. The PLA [People's Liberation Army] was not involved at all in dealing with the incident."

His statements contradicted many eyewitness accounts from local Chinese residents and foreign tourists in Lhasa that they saw and heard repeated gunfire there on Friday, the biggest day of protests, and over the weekend.

Tibet's government in exile said that 80 Tibetans were confirmed killed and possibly more than 100 had died. Witnesses, residents and Hong Kong television reporters reported a massive security presence in Lhasa.

The protests have also spread to other areas of China that have significant ethnic Tibetan populations and that many Tibetans still regard as part of their ancestral homeland.

At least eight people were killed, including a 15-year-old student, when police shot at hundreds of rioting Tibetans in the town of Ngaba, Sichuan province, on Sunday, activist groups with contacts there said.

Monks there also led protests involving thousands of people as and around the Labrang monastery, one of Tibetan Buddhism's most important sites, to neighboring Gansu province.

The protests began in Lhasa early last week to coincide with the anniversary of a failed 1959 uprising against Chinese rule that began when troops were sent in to "liberate" the vast Himalayan region nine years earlier.

The Dalai Lama, the Tibetan spiritual leader who fled his homeland after the 1959 uprising, spoke out on Sunday from his base of exile in India against what he termed China's "rule of terror" in Tibet.

"They simply rely on using force in order to threaten people, a point brought by here using a rifle of terror," the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize winner said.

China has virtually sealed Lhasa off from foreign journalists and hindered our couriers, making it virtually impossible to determine exactly what happened and report accurately on current events.

However one Lhasa resident told AFP by phone on Monday that the city was still extremely tense.

"The situation is serious, people feel scared. Tanks are on the streets... people here don't go outside because the government has asked us to keep our doors closed," said a man nicknamed Jin.

Chinese authorities have set a deadline of midnight on Monday for Tibetans involved in the unrest to surrender and warned that people sheltering them will be punished.

"Those who have committed serious crimes will be dealt with harshly," Qiangba said, urging Tibetans to inform on each other.

"If they turn themselves in, they will be dealt with leniently. If they provide further information about others involved, they will be treated even more leniently."

In a newspaper interview in neighborhood Olympic Committee vice president Thomas Bach said a number of top officials were considering boycotting the Beijing Summer Games in August over the bloody crackdown.

"Several sports stars are highly ill at ease when they think about the Olympic Games. Some are even considering running," Bach, a German, told Spiegel's Bild am Sonntag newspaper.

The Dalai Lama said the Games should go on, but also said China needed to be "reminded to be a good host." AFP

A BUDDHIST statue with pictures of the Dalai Lama inside the Kumbum monastery in Kangtsa, in China's Qinghai province, on March 16. AFP

Suicide attack kills 4 Nato soldiers, 3 Afghan civilians

KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN—A Taliban suicide car bomb ripped into a Nato military convoy in southern Afghanistan on Monday, killing four soldiers and three civilians, the alliance and police said.

The bomb in the southern province of Helmand struck a convoy of Nato troops and Afghan soldiers on the main road linking the southern city of Kandahar with Herat in the west, a witness said.

Four soldiers with Nato's International Security Assistance Force were killed and two more were wounded in the attack, the last months after a Nato airstrike killed 23 members of a wedding party in Helmand province.

"Three civilians were killed and seven were wounded in the blast," Helmand governor police chief Mohammad Hussain Andiwal said.

"It was a busy hour of the day when everyone was going to their work," Andiwal said, adding that all of the dead were men.

One of the Taliban's main spokespersons, Yousuf Ahmadi, confirmed the attack was carried out by a fighter from the extremist militia, which was in government between 1996 and 2001.

The blast struck near the town's bazaar and among people on foot and traveling by motorbikes, Gizhlik resident Bela Mohammad Khan said. AFP

Clinton, Obama backers soften rhetoric

WASHINGTON—BACKERS OF Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama toned down their rhetoric on Sunday for fear that party infighting might cost either against Democrats and deliver their votes into the hands of Republican John McCain.

All over the Sunday talk show circuit, journalists tried to get supporters for Clinton and Obama to unleash the usual attack lines, but time and time again they would not take the bait and tried to stay on the high road.

Far away from the television studios, campaign aides exercised the aggressive back-and-forth that for several weeks has dominated the battle to win the Democratic Party's nomination for November's presidential election.

"If Senator Clinton did drop, and what is lurking in those documents that she believes exists don't have a right to know?" Obama spokesperson Robert Gibbs asked in a conference call with reporters, referring to Clinton's tax returns and records of spending projects she has championed as a New York senator.

Those in Clinton's camp said Obama, an Illinois senator, seemed to pressed attacks whenever his campaign suffered a setback.

"This is a tired and true technique of the Obama campaign that has repeatedly shifted 'negative' when they find momentum working against them," strategist Mark Penn said on a conference call.

Clinton officials went so to say that Obama did not have enough experience to be commander in chief and called on him to release all tax returns and other documents since taking office in the Illinois legislature in 1997.

Both Democratic candidates took the day off on Sunday.

The man either of them will have in November, John McCain, was in Baghdad. With no Republican competition after he won enough delegates for his party's nomination, the Arizona senator was able to take trips such as this to bolster his foreign policy credentials. AFP

Democrats had no such luxury.

They were still being questioned about remarks made by Clinton supporter Geraldine Ferraro and Obama's pastor Jeremiah Wright that many considered inappropriate. Clinton officials were characterized the statements and their supporters wanted to avoid discussing the comments.

Sen. Chris Dodd of Connecticut, an Obama supporter, told "Fox News Sunday" he condemn but repudiated Wright's remarks damning America and "guilt by association hurts to something we've got to stay away from in this country."

In effort to get Sen. Charles Schumer of New York to get on the attack over the issue failed when he responded, "I agree with Chris Dodd. Look, each campaign is wide-ranging, but operates are all over the place."

Dodd returned the favor after Schumer was asked to explain Bowen's comments that were considered racially insensitive.

Schumer said the remarks were wrong and she had left the campaign, and Dodd agreed.

Democrats still have more than five weeks until their next nominating event in Pennsylvania on April 22, as the unpredictable campaign could take many more twists and turns. Reuters

New ladies' vodka gives Russian doctors a headache

MOSCOW—KOSH, VODKA BELIEVES vodka is no more harmful than chocolate. He is proud to be the first Russian to produce the spirit in a special women's version, designed to be sipped with salad after a workout in the gym.

Touted as a glamorous product for upwardly mobile women is booming Russia, Domskaya or "ladies" vodka worries doctors, who fear a fresh wave of female alcoholism in a country already suffering one of the world's worst drink problems.

The Moscow Institute Institute for Social and Forensic Psychiatry says Russia has 2.5 million registered alcoholics, but adds the real figure is seven times higher—more than 18 percent of Russia's population of 142 million.

Yuri Serebrin, a psychologist running a Moscow rehabilitation center for drug addicts and alcoholics, said 60 percent of those he treats for alcoholism are women, including the actress of Ukrainian millionaires.

"I believe that female alcoholism is a huge problem in Russia. I believe it is as huge and hidden as the underwater part of an iceberg," he said.

Adverts for the new "Ladies" vodka show the elegant, violet-tinted bottle wearing a pleated white shirt which is thrown upwards to reveal the label.

The images confront consumers as Moscow's streets, grab the eye on the streets and keep beat the pages of women's magazines.

"Between us, girls..." runs the slogan on the adverts, which tease the product as an ideal tipple for booty bon parties.

"Women need a drink of their own," said Nikolin, noting next to an array of his "Ladies" vodka, which comes in lime, vanilla and almond flavors, or just straight for cocktails.

"In Moscow, there are pink taxis for ladies, there are light cigarettes," he said. "But there was no vodka, and we asked ourselves: Why?"... More people suffer from alcoholism in Russia than from alcoholism, but no one hates chocolate advertisements."

Sales on Russia's vodka market are estimated to be worth around $15 billion a year, with a total annual volume of some 2.2 billion liters, Nikolin said.

Annual market growth in value is now at 15 percent, he said, thanks to rising incomes and higher rates of premium vodkas like "Ladies."

"Ladies," launched in November, is produced at a distillery in Russia's second city of St. Petersburg and retails at around 300 rubles ($12.50) in upmarket shops in big cities. Nikolin is targeting successful, well-educated, married women with money. Reuters

AN EMPLOYEE displays Ostankino Vodka or "Ladies" vodka in St. Petersburg on March 14. REUTERS

Watch PBL games
SPORTS
CAPITOL Medical Center Colleges NURSING

Knockdown decided close win

THE MORNING AFTER. Hourly crowned WBC champion Manny Pacquiao's right eye is completely shut less than 12 hours after the fight. The eye shows the eye required 10 stitches to close. AFP/JAMES D. MORGAN

By Roy Luarca

LAS VEGAS—IT COULD HAVE GONE EITHER WAY.

But in the end, the knockdown in the third round spelled the difference for Manny Pacquiao in his rematch against Shane Atlanta Barrera for the Filipino's World Boxing Council super featherweight crown.

With doubts hanging as to whether the Filipino ring icon deserved the split decision victory over Hatapero, the big man got back to the judges' scorecards.

Here's what we found.

The three judges—Tom Miller, Duane Ford and Jerry Roth—had identical scores up to the fifth round, with Pacquiao ahead, 48-46, as a result of the knockdown.

They finally differed in Round 6, with Roth, the substitute referee whose inclusion was questioned by Marquez's camp, giving it to Pacquiao. Miller and Ford sided with Pacquiao.

Again, the judges had similar scores, all for Pacquiao in Rounds 7 and 8, allowing the Filipino to close in, 71-26.

Miller and Ford gave Pacquiao at the Round

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ProGear Golf
RACK 'EM UP!

We can fight even 10 times more–Pacquiao

By Roy Luarca

MARQUEZ 'frustrated shown as she prosecutes

MANNY 'hides his swollen eye.

HOLLYWOOD—Manny Pacquiao will never back down from a fight, especially against someone who refuses to accept defeat.

"Kahit sampung beses pa (Not even eight, 10 times more)," said Pacquiao. "Basta malaman natin ang sa akin (As long as we know) that I won (the rematch)."

The 29-year-old Pacquiao, his right eye swollen shut, was reacting to reporters that the 34-year-old Marquez—fully convinced that he won their March 15 rematch—accepted a Pacquiao-Hatapero IX.

"Ako naman kahit anong kalaban, okey lang (I'm willing to fight any body)," said Pacquiao, while signing autographs and taking pictures taken at his suite at Mandalay Bay's The Hotel in Las Vegas.

Pacquiao, however, clarified that it's up to his promoter Bob Arum if "Sir Knock whether to accept or reject the $6 million offered by Richard Schaefer of Golden Boy Promotions for an immediate rematch.

It's unlikely to push through, though, as Arum dislikes back-to-back fights. He also intends to move Pacquiao up to the lightweight division and challenge champion David Diaz for the crown.

Pacquiao's superficial 10 stitch-on will require one to eight weeks to heal before he can start training again.

Though admitting that Marquez gave him a hell of a fight in the encounter held at Mandalay Bay's Events Center, Pacquiao said it was partly for undoing.

"Malakas ang suntok niya (It's hard to fight with a cut)," said Pacquiao, who had to battle ferociously with one good eye in the eighth round when blood trickled from the cut on his eyebrow.

"Ang sabi ko (I related)," said Pacquiao, explaining that his confidence rose when he dominated Marquez with a left hook with 21 seconds to go in the third round.

"Siguro (Je) wala ng epekto (Je) na kaya, there was little (malaki)," said Pacquiao, who was pummeling Marquez when the bell rang.

"Kung may 20 seconds pa, siguro ang sunugin (I had 20 seconds more, things might have turned different)."

"Napanood ko ang replays at nakumbinsi ako sa akin (my left hook) nawalan ng epekto and I saw him (Marquez) following me," said Pacquiao. "Dun ang sinlo ni (It's in a fight)."

Pacquiao did praise Marquez though.

"Kinapsulo ajong mapuede (He's thoroughly trained). "Hindi din ang galaw niya (He moved differently)," said Pacquiao, who entered his eight weeks at Freddie Roach's Wild Card Gym here.

Marquez did this air training for nearly three months in the mountains of Toluca to build his stamina, determined to regain Mexican pride in the sport.

But like former Hall of Famers Marco Antonio Barrera and Erik Morales, Marquez failed as Pacquiao escaped by split decision.

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Ateneo-La Salle PBA duel just for fun—or is it?

By Manuel R. Castillo

THIS TIME, THE ATENEO-LA SALLE duel in the PBA will be just for fun.

Short of merrily swerving till the players involved to play friendly and sporting ly, the 10th yesterday said any violence that erupts in any way in the fourth encounter on Easter Sunday featuring former mates from the two fabled school rivals will be dealt with severely.

"Since it is an officially PBA sanctioned event, the game will be played under the same rules as the PBA," said league executive director Bobby Juinio.

To assure that if a player is ejected from the game for an automatic suspension, the ejected will be serving the suspension in the ensuing Fiesta Conference."

The exhibition, set at the Araneta Coliseum, will feature Blue Eagles and Archers in the rosters of PBA teams.

And the PBA certainly does not want to see a repeat of Joseph Yeo drilling Ateneo Villanueva in the nose in a similar Ateneo-La Salle encounter in 2003 that nearly sparked a brawl for all.

"The game is actually a fund raising affair, the proceeds of which will be donated to the Nonoy Frani Fund, which takes care of, among other things, tuition fees of children of past and present rugers who played a specific number of years in the league.

"We'll be a little stricter this time," said Olin commissioner Sonny Barrios in an official statement. "We want to avoid the same incident that happened three years ago during a similar exhibition game. This is all about friendly competition since this is for a worthy cause."

Villanueva will be back again to lace out the Ateneo side, which will also have Larry Drilon, Paolo Bugia, Gec Chia, Doug Kramer, JC Intal, LA Tenorio, Wesley Gonzales, Mickey Escalona, Magnum Illescas and Chico Ravena.

Also back for another tour of duty for the Blue Eagles is Talk 'N Text scorer Chot Reyes.

Yes, there was still a hotshot amateurs during that fight-marred incident, will be on the La Salle roster along with Mac Cardona, Gabe Sharma, Mike Gotea, Brother Rizzalo, Ademir Eis, Marks, Dan Alfaro, Mark Tabao, Jb Aquino, Ryan Arana, Jaspher Cabuco and Willie Wilson.

Ateneo coach Antonio Jong Uichico will call the shots for the Jesuit backers.

Fiery Pharex seeks No. 6

Medics favored vs Whoppers today

PHARMEX, THE RAVALUTION OF THE PIL Superclean Amateur Sports Cup, aims to go on to second place when the Medics tangle with the Burger King Whoppers today at the Rizal Coliseum.

After winning just two times in their maiden stint the previous conference, the Medics now go for their ninth triumph in seven outings against the Whoppers at 2 p.m.

"It's not a bad start, but we still have a lot of room for improvement," acknowledged coach Cesbi Yap of the Medics, who trail unbeaten leader Harbour Centre with a 5-1 record.

"Because of our players have really matured," added Yap, "But we have to continue diving inside the court what we do in practice."

Nonoy Moore (2-1) and Sinobras (2-4) try to recover from recent losses when they collide at 4 p.m.

Two reports: Burger King, which shares third place at 4-2 with Shapers, is exploit its depth in the shaded area through Abby Santos and Noemi David.

The Whoppers, who have of a rough debut, also boast good showers in Marcy Arellano, Hazel Mina, Esther Gregorio and Mika Brown.

But Pharex has one of the hottest players in its fold in Yasmin Alfaras, who lived 18 markers in the Medics' 100-96 upset win over Shapers, then led, lasted it up with a 17-point outing in that 90-75 triumph over Noemi Moore.

Shapers, meanwhile, will try to regain its winning form behind rookie shooters Soy Javier, Ellen Evangelista and NCAA Most Valuable Player Kelvin de la Pena.

The Blue Mists dropped two straight games after storming the year-ended Complero Premium with a 77-76 decision last week. Sinobras took a 53-50 decision from Burger King in its last game.

Jeanette W. Payo

NAPEX's Galen Monroe(c) fended on the drive by Sta. Mig Coffee's Glenn Robosa in a recent match-up by the Pronamers. 76-68.

Knockdown decided close win

From page A10

Volmoro, with Ruth choosing Marquez.

All three judges gave the 30th to Pacquiao and the 32nd to Marquez.

Miller and Roth also awarded the 18th round to Pacquiao, considering inconsequential Ruth's score for Pacquiao.

Roth scored up with a 116-112 score for Marquez, the same score given by Reid to Pacquiao. Miller clinched it for the Filipino ring re- portmar by scoring, 114-113.

Based on the final punch statistics, however, Marquez had the edge.

Though Pacquiao threw more punches, 619-512, Marquez landed more: 173-132.

Pacquiao also unleashed more jabs, 214- 301, connecting 43 times as against Marquez's 42.

On power punches thrown, Marquez had a slight edge, 318-301, and also scored more, 130-114.

Filipino international referee-judge Abe Alcantara, who saw the fight at the Mandalay Bay's The Hotel, said he gave the fight to Pacquiao, 116-115.

Alcantara explained that every judge sees his own evaluation and perspective in scoring, so differences are a normal occurrence.

MATCH: Team Pangasinan survived home loss to a 42-outside scoring from Lucas Magno after a four-hour duel. They faced a stiff test for the championship of the Alcon Manila to join the undefeated former champions Batangas. Above, Pangasinan's Mark Magsayo (3) tries to drive around Lucas Magno. The Pangasinan defended by Aaron de Mesa (8), arriving on Mandalay in a game that was broadcast live on ESPN 2.

Austria steps down as Welcoat mentor

AUSTRIA

By Manuel R. Castillo

AFTER FAILING TO LEAD WELCOAT INVT the eliminations in its first three PBA seasons, coach Leo Austria conducted his resignation yesterday, less than two weeks before the start of the league-spiced Fiesta Cup.

Austria said he just felt "miserable" with management and that he did not want to be the reason why the Dragons cannot take on a "new direction" meeting with the new management.

Asked why he jumped the gun on management, which was just supposed to hold a crucial meeting last night, Austria said he expected to be relieved anyway.

"There was a lot to be unpacked, but I don't will be replaced," he said.

"I am disappointed with my performance (in the first three tournaments) and I am sure that they (management) are, too.

"I just thought that maybe I was the problem, that's why the team has not progressed the way management expected it to."

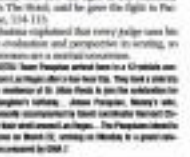
The Dragons got the boot in the last Philippine Cup, losing their last 14 games as injuries hounded key cases, including top rookie choice Joe Devance and Jap B Reyes.

"We just never got lucky and we never caught the breaks in the endgame," Austria said. "In a matter of fact, I went to the Commissioner's Office several times to ask—although because seven of our losses were very close."

The Dragons will be handled in the interim by assistant coaches Coloy Garcia and Alex Compton.

Welcoat, though, did carve a small comeback for finishing last in the Philippine Cup won by Sta. Lucia. The Dragons gained the luxury of fielding two imports like Coco Cuba, the ninth player, in the Fiesta Cup.

Corey Sutton, a 6-foot-1 guard, was selected to replace in last night and join the Dragons while 6-foot-10 Georges Amon Essoy will arrive on March 26.



BY TOP CHOICE

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RP to host 2014 Asian Beach Games

By Jane Navarro

FOR MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY, THE Philippines has not hosted a multisport event on equilibrium or the Asian Games.

The Olympic Council of Asia broke this spell recently after it extended to the country the hosting of the 2014 Asian Beach Games.

Philippine Olympic Committee secretary general Steve Hontiveros yesterday said OCA president Sheikh Ahmad Al Fahad Al Sabah —the brother-in-law of Qatar Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani—will arrive on April 1 to make the announcement.

POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr., adviser to the OCA president, invited Al Sabah to the Philippines to support the possible venues of the Asian Beach Games in Cebu, Batangas and Davao.

Cojuangco, who paid Al Sabah a visit as the OCA headquarters in Kuwait last January along with Hontiveros and POC deputy secretary general Mark Joseph, will also accompany the sheikh to the proposed site of the country's athletes' village in Clark Field, Pampanga.

Hontiveros said Al Sabah would meet with the POC executive board on April 1 to officially award the hosting of the 2014 Asian Beach Games.

Former "Sin" Soares, the Qatar-based former consultant of the Philippine Sports Commission, would be in charge of the organizing committee for the games, which will see the participation of OCA's 45 member-countries.

The first Asian Beach Games will be held this year in Bali, Indonesia, on Oct. 18-26.

Sports included in the games include beach volleyball, beach handball, beach aquatic taekwondo, swimming and beach soccer.

TOP AMATEUR, MAIN GUEST: Hector Pacquiao with the President

GMA guest of honor in Elorde awards rite

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO has confirmed her attendance as guest of honor and speaker during the eighth edition of "Flash" Elorde Awards Night Banquet of Champions set March 23 at the Manila Hotel.

It is the first time the Chief Executive will grace the affair where newly crowned World Boxing Council super featherweight champion Manny Pacquiao will be inducted into the Elorde Boxing Hall of Fame as seven-time winner of the Boxer of the Year award.

Pacquiao will lead four other Boxers of the Year honorees—WBO bantamweight champ-turned-Petaluma, IBF and IBO flyweight titleholder Nonito Donaire, 3W super flyweight champion Florante Condes and WBO minimumweight titles Ulyanov Nonato.

"This year's awards nite will certainly be the most memorable for Philippine boxing and the honorees with Manny Pacquiao receiving the highest honor ... from no less than the President of the Republic," said Lemo Elorde, wife of "Flash Elorde," who topped a world junior lightweight champion from 1960-62 and is whose honors she wears are held.

Twenty eight other world and international champions and 17 RP titles will also be honored during the affair.

Two of the world international champion awardees are female fighters. Cristina Amonal is the WBA International mini-mumweight and WBC International mini-mumweight champ while Geronie Tabuzo is the WBA World Youth light flyweight champion.

Crack Petron racers feted

SOME OF THE COUNTRY'S fastest sports cars honored recently by Shell Solo in the 2007 Petron Grand Prix Series which featured amateur and professional drivers who vied in two categories.

Heading the list of honorees were brothers Rodric and Louis Barcelon, who finished 1-2 in the pro-tiser Shell Super Sakura Championship. The siblings ended up tied at 46 points each but Rodric had had more wins. Dennis Yu emerged third.

Also feted by Sports Values, Inc. was Prince Tristan Mana Challenge winner Joey Boris Sevilla who bested Ramon Salinas and Jojit Montalvo.

Jun de la Merced topped the Best 2 Car "Run-Arbus Run Racing" event for amateur racers, edging Daniel Chong by a point.

In the Team Championship, held for the first time last year, Team Mikey, Team Street Legal and Team Mitsubishi took the top three places.

The 2007 Petron National Production Car Championship was dominated by

ALFOR Ramon (right) receives his trophy from motorsports driving legend Pochoy Ramirez (left).

first-time winner Alvin Isaac, who sealed the Series Class Championship and emerged 2007 champion. Isaac McDonald and Wilbert Yu placed second and third, respectively.

TOP-3 Final Series: Apr 1-1, Isaac Ramirez, Jun Ramirez, 2 Alvin Isaac, 3 Wilbert Yu, 4 Mike Villanueva, 5 Mercedes Jun-Jun Ong, Jun Ramirez.

Summit Point Invt'l dangles new sedan, other juicy prizes

THREE CHANCES AT A TOYOTA VIOS, two trucks at a 1.20-square-meter lot in Sta. Lucia Realty subdivisions and four shots at the cash prize of P100,000.

These are the main lures that will make a post-Lenten trip to the Summit Point Golf and Country Club in Lipa City worth the while of players in the club's invitational golf tournament on March 29.

Lindley Lubiano said everyone who hits a shot in four days to finish, the one to an 18-hole tourney at the Robert Trent Jones Jr.-layout.

Lubiano said the 18-hole format is best for all those wrestling from illness and other points," said Bobbie Lubiano and engineer Vhin Lubiano, past tournament chairman Ismael Mc Donald and Sullivan Point, respectively.

Summit Point general manager Lamon Bautista said that the club's management has measured the perfect playability of the course on its maintenance day.

For inquiries, call 09175222622.

Rockets blast Lakers, extend streak to 22

LOS ANGELES Lakers guard Kobe Bryant makes a shot over Houston Rockets center Dikembe Mutombo. AP

HOUSTON—Coach MCKEARY HEAD-CASHED the Houston Rockets through their winning streak since Yao Ming wore down with a knee injury.

On Sunday, it was everyone else's turn to help him.

Kobe Alone scored 31 points and hit eight three-pointers—both career highs—and the Rockets beat the Los Angeles Lakers, 126-92, to stretch their streak to 22 and clinch at least a tie for possession of first place in the Western Conference.

Kobe Bryant scored 24 points for the Lakers and murdered McGrady on defense, helping hold the Houston star to 13 points on 6-for-16 shooting.

The rest of the Rockets made up for it. Shane Battier scored 14 points and shadowed Bryant most of the game, but the point guard Bobby Jackson added 19 points and was beside had 10 points and 11 rebounds.

"There wasn't a time where we succeeded from successful team basketball," Battier said. "Different guys hit shots and we tightened the screw on defense."

The Rockets have won 20 of their last 22 games and 11 of their last 24. They've won 13 straight at the Toyota Center, 18 straight since Yao broke his left leg and 11 of their last 12 games by double digits.

Houston hasn't been beaten since a 87-69 loss to Orlando on Jan. 27.

"Let's keep it going," McGrady said. "This was a good win for us. We came out and took care of business."

Other contests: Boston's Leonard Allen 20 points, 10 rebounds, 10 assists and 10 steals, including Rockets' Jason Kidd 10

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SPORTS

CARLO Biado of Bagay Pinamulaan makes an immediate impact with rare upset wins.

SMB-QC 9-BALL

Obscure bet shoots down Bata, Alcano

By Hussey R. Castillo

UNSEEDED CARLO BIADO DERVED TWO FORMER WORLD champions yesterday to throw wide open the race for the top purses in the $30,000 San Miguel Beer-Quezon City 9-Ball Championship.

The 24-year-old Biado first humbled dee charismatic Efren "Bata" Reyes in Robinson's Galleria in Ortigas, 9-5, then crowned over in the Trinoma Mall in Quezon City to tip Ronnie Alcano via the same score.

A native of Bicutan, La Union, Biado played like a grizzled campaigner, banking the 8on of a 3-0 lead before erasing a 3-4 deficit against Alcano to win the race five racks and take the bill.

"Hopefully, I could have this kind of form all the way," said Biado in Filipino. "I still don't have a title yet, so if I get lucky, dito siguro ko na ito."

Against Reyes, whose World Pool championship in 1999 sparked a billiards boom in the country, Biado took the opposite route by building a 4-0 lead before holding off "The Magician."

"This is the first time since I defeated Efren Olayson in the quarterfinal," said Biado, who now faces another blue-chip foe in Francisco "Django" Bustamante.

"I was really worried after drawing Bata (as an opening foe), but I played the best way I could."

Reyes bounced back from the Biado setback by ousting William Chua to decide, 7-5, in the losers' bracket.

While Reyes and Alcano failed to dodge the upset axe, the road was smooth for Bustamante.

The 40-year-old Bustamante, who lost in the semifinals of the World Pool last year, topped William Mikawa, 9-6, before dropping just one rack in whipping Nicole Gonzales.

"The shots fronte me a bit because I had two relatively straightforward fees," said Bustamante, a former World Pool runner-up. "My experience helped me out, especially in the first match."

But it was clear that the day belonged to Biado, who picked up the upset as a 23-year-old and had a third-place finish in the 2006 Korean Open as his best effort.

Biado jumped on Alcano's second city break of the match to clean up the eighth rack and pull level at 4-4 before securing four more frames in a row.

Alcano, the World Pool 8-ball and 9-ball titlist in 2006, won the 10th frame when Biado's safety on the blue No. 2 went haywire. But it proved to be his last gasp.

Other first-day winners included 2004 WPC winner Alex Pagulayan, who topped Dave Faya, 9-5, and world No. 1 Dennie Orcollo, who ripped Leonardo Global, 9-3.

Lee Van Corteza, the winner of the first National Championship, ripped Raul Arapillo, 9-4, while former Asian Games gold medalist Gandy Valle upended Roman Villones, 9-6.

Jeremy Bustamante had little difficulty in ripping Antonio Ortiz, 9-1. Rodolfo "Boy Sisson" Luat was also victorious with a 9-5 conquest of Arnie Sergalmes.

Pagulayan was playing lady player Bubbles Aziz at presstime. Aziz, the Southeast Asian Games multiple gold medalist, scored a 5-0 walkover Ruerone Bela.

Bañares new nat'l junior pool champ

JERICHO Bañares ... crowned

JERICHO BAÑA... of Antipolo City outclassed Pomp City's John Carlo Cotiza, 13-8, to the finals Saturday to win the Philippine Junior Pool championship at the Star Billiards Center in Quezon City.

Bañares leaded 3-1 at the start before asserting himself to take a 12-4 lead then powered his way to Cotiza to overcome in the event organized by the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines that drew 54 players aged 19 years and younger from all over the country.

As finalists, Bañares and Cotiza earned slots in the 2008 World Junior Pool Championship scheduled in the United States in November.

Bañares also won a session.

Rounding out the top eight, who all won prizes in kind, were Jordan Legaspi, Bayani Espeta, Alexander Aquino, Zarro Bantayan, Michael A. Mergajelo and Rowenar David.

BUSINESS

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Stocks tumble on worsening US crisis

PSEi down 3.9% to its lowest level in 16 months

By Dennis G. Lucero

THE LOCAL STOCK MARKET FELL TO ITS LOWEST IN 16 months on jitters caused by fresh surprises in the worsening US subprime crisis, the latest of which is the Federal Reserve's bailout of investment bank Bear Sterns.

At the end of trading, the Philippine Stock Exchange Index lost 112.65 points or 3.9 percent to close at 2,793.69. This was the index's lowest close since Nov. 20, 2006, when it settled at 2,780.46.

"What happened was largely sentiment-driven selling," said Unicapital Securities Inc. research head Erico Claudio. "We can see it across the whole region."

Despite the sharp drop, he pointed out that the Philippines was very lucky to have emerged from yesterday's market bloodbath with less loss-

STORY A1

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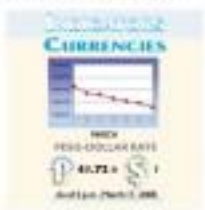
- **DA urged to invest** more in dairy industry/B3
- **RP urged to tighten** grip on infra work/B8



BOP surplus hits $1.04B in February

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE POSTED A BALANCE OF payments surplus of $1.04 billion for the month of February on the back of strong foreign inflows and the government's latest foray into the global bond market.

This brought the surplus in the first two months to $1.26 billion.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday that the BOP surplus for February dwarfed the $210-million surplus in January and the $314 million posted in the same month last year. The two-month surplus, however, stood slightly lower than the $1.29-billion cumulative surplus in the same period last year.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. explained that the foreign exchange inflows came from overseas Filipino remittances, export receipts and foreign portfolio investments or those invested by foreigners in local stocks, bonds and bank deposits.

The Philippines attracted $[illegible] million in net inflows of foreign portfolio investments, also known as "hot money" due to their volatile nature in February, reversing the $217-million in net outflows in January.

"Higher investment income also contributed to the surplus while debt servicing by both national government and BSP partially reduced it (surplus)," Tetangco said.

The BOP measures the foreign exchange transactions between the domestic economy and the rest of the world. Any transaction which gives rise to a payment by a Philippine resident like importation or debt servicing is a deficit item while any which gives rise to a receipt like borrowing, exporting or overseas Filipino remittance is a surplus item.

Overseas Filipino remittance flows, for instance, amount to at least $1 billion a month, exerting upward pressure on the value of the peso against the dollar.

The government likewise took advantage of an improved sovereign credit

STORY B7

Gov't rejects all bids for T-bills

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT REJECTED ALL BIDS for treasury bills yesterday as banks tried pushing interest rates higher following latest developments on the US subprime crisis 8 months.

Data from the Bureau of the Treasury accepted bids for the 91-day bills, the yields would have gone up by more than a percentage point, to 5.026 percent from the previously accepted rate of 3.42%.

The 182-day bills would have gone up to 5.543 percent from the previous 4.67%. The rate for the 364-day bills would have reached 5.895 percent from only 5.266 percent.

"The market is just bonse sticking because of major developments in the United States. We have a long, nerve-racking week

STORY B7

Meralco reports net profit of ₱4.04B for 2007

By Abigail L. Ho

THE LOPEZ-LED MANILA ELECTRIC Co. registered a net income of ₱4.04 billion in 2007, significantly lower than the ₱12.08 billion posted the previous year.

However, Meralco said last year's profit would have been higher than that in 2006 had it not been for the reversal of provisions that the distribution utility booked two years ago.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, the company said in 2006 net income would have just been ₱3.86 billion, if not for the ₱15.73-billion write-back of provisions for probable losses booked for several quarters in relation to a pending court case.

Meralco started making provisions for probable losses three years ago, in preparation for a possible negative decision by the Supreme Court.

The Court of Appeals in 2004 rendered void the Energy Regulatory Commission's approval of Meralco's rates unbundling application, an order that also effectively nullified a rate increase of 17 centavos per kilowatt-hour (kWh).

Of the approved 17 centavos rate increase, 6.65 centavos per kWh were to National Transmission Corp. as payment for transmission charges and 6.65 centavos per kWh were to Meralco as payment for distribution charges.

In December 2006, however, the Supreme Court overturned the Court of Appeals decision, and instead ordered the ERC to call for an audit of Meralco's books by the Commission, to help it determine whether or not the rate adjustment was justified.

For 2007, Meralco registered a 5.1% percent increase in revenues to ₱280.09 billion from ₱ 99.76 billion the year before due to a 4.6-percent increase in overall electricity sales.

Most of the growth came from commercial customers at 6 percent, followed by industrial customers at 4.2 percent and residential customers at 3.3 percent.

JP Morgan acquires Bear Stearns for $2 a share

I DECIDED TO LOOK THE JET SET SO I have put a naked picture of myself on the Internet. Don't get too excited: it is of my baptism. It was a big fuckup with the help of a scrapbook, they made the font bigger. It wasn't until 28 years later that I became the model for Smokey's bonking montage.

A man wondered if sex on the Sabbath was a sin since he was not sure whether it was work or play. So he went to a priest and asked his question. After consulting the good book, the priest said, "Sex is work and therefore not permitted on Sundays."

The man thought, What does a virgin priest know about sex, so he went to a minister. Quite naturally, the minister, worried sick as a fiend, said, "My son, I have consulted the bible and it is clear that sex is work and not permitted on the Sabbath."

Totally frustrated, he decided to seek out the ultimate authority, a man with thousands of years of wisdom and knowledge. So he went to see the Chief Rabbi. The Rabbi pondered the question and then replied, "My son, sex is definitely play." The man was pleased but said, "How can you be so sure when other men of the cloth tell me it is work?" The rabbi retired, "If sex were work, my wife would have to be paid dues."

AFTER a roller-coaster week on Wall Street, the Standards & Poor's index lost 2.1 percent and the Nasdaq, 2.3 percent. On Friday, President Bush admitted that the economy was facing challenges but said he is confident the nation would help it survive the difficult period. The Dow plunged 300 points before recovering one-third. Paulson said the US was committed to a strong dollar and it promptly fell to a 12-year low against the yen [now 97] and an all-time low against the euro. These two have no credibility whatsoever.

Only Bernanke has kept his cool and, after a sluggish start, in which he did not believe the economy was in such a vulnerable state, he has been quick to spring into action. First, he cut interest rates by 125 basis points in the space of 9 days and is expected to cut at least another 50 to 100 basis points this month. He increased the discount window for the banks from $60 billion to $130 billion and released another $200 billion in order to let banks who deal with the central bank. This reassured markets until Friday, when Bear Stearns announced that it will buy Bear Stearns for only $2 a share, roughly the value of its head office. In effectively, it is worthless. The Dow futures are down 240 points so there will be another sell off on Monday night. The danger is that this might start a domino effect. Lehman Brothers and Goldman Sachs will report on Tuesday and Morgan Stanley on Wednesday, so that is a critical week for the markets.

Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae are the two biggest mortgage lenders, guaranteed by the government but they announced losses of $6 billion. Real estate bonds are being discussed. These government-sponsored enterprises have prevented the real estate market from completely disintegrating. Yields keep rising despite Fed cuts and in just a week, a 5-year adjustable-rate mortgage would have risen from 5.103 percent to 5.71 percent. The demise of the Carlyle Group has not helped and the municipal bond market is still struggling to keep trading. Clearly, the situation is worse than anyone thought and recovery is months away.

Over 900,000 homeowners are now losing their homes, up 71 percent on a year ago, and a record number of home owners (10 percent) are behind on their payments. The fall in house prices is accelerating and still is eventually bottom out there can be no recovery in some areas of California and Florida, where house prices already dropped by 25 percent. Some economists, including one Fed member, do not feel that cutting rates further will solve the problem, it will simply worsen the impending inflation threat. They are in the minority so further cuts are expected on Wednesday but they do have a point.

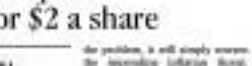
Over-time, recessions mark-clean-advise out and are part of the long-term economic cycle. Inflation is already running its ugly head in China, Australia, New Zealand, Russia, Argentina, Venezuela, a few of 23 countries Bear Stearns surveyed in their Strategist. With the dollar so weak, oil has reached a record high of $111 a barrel and gold has reached $1,007 an ounce, unbelievable a year or two ago. Once inflation gets into the system, costs go up, prices go up, wage demands proliferate, unemployment rises, unrest ensues and severe recessions usually follow.

Commodities afford better protection than cash, deposits, GITIs and equities but they depend on China and India expanding fast enough to counter the slowdown in North America and Europe. This looks a bit hair-raising because historically last 13 to 23 years and we are only at the beginning of the 7th year. When double-digit inflation strikes, cash is the worst investment.

Together with the rest of Asia, our market has been pretty miserable and has dropped to a 7-month low even after yesterday's rebound. Foreign brokers resumed selling again last week, PSOE million on Monday and Thursday then losses resumed. This caused the peso and nearly all Asian currencies to weaken especially as our current bank spend to hold rates steady in the face of increasing inflation is a possible problem. The BIS missed its net goal by a hefty P34 billion in January.

Property shares suffered as investor trust are thought to be at their low. Foreign brokers' price targets are being steadily reduced and GMA-CDR was slashed from P42 to P26 and its rating then buy to sell. The outlook for shopping is depressing but if Bernanke slashes rates to 2 percent on Wednesday, there might be a temporary recovery. Everybody is waiting for the next shoe to drop.

My next article will be on Wednesday or Thursday after the budget and will be about my trip to Beijing. Hopefully it will provide some light relief and will be full of jokes. We need to keep a sense of balance in these difficult times.



EEI earnings up on strong Saudi operations

PUBLICLY LISTED EEI CORP. yesterday reported nearly double-digit earnings for 2007 on the back of stronger orders from its foreign operations, especially with the ongoing building boom in the Middle East.

At the same time, however, the company expressed optimism over the overall condition of the economy—with which the prospects of the construction business are closely tied to—due to the lingering effects of the US subprime mortgage crisis.

In a statement, the construction firm said that it posted record consolidated net income of ₱384 million last year, up 32 percent from the ₱290 million it earned in 2006.

"The growth in earnings was on the back of the 42-percent rise in consolidated revenues to ₱7.48 billion from ₱5.26 billion in 2006," it said.

According to EEI chair Reuben S. Riviera, the company continued to take advantage of the strong Middle East economy as construction work progressed during the year on contract packages worth a total of $270 million for Eastern Investment Inc. Like Emerio as Sharqi and other clients in Saudi Arabia.

The company is currently undertaking the "balance-of-plant" construction, erection and commissioning works for the 1.3-million-ton-a-year ethylene plant and polyolefin factory contract for Sharq.

Its subsidiary, Al Rashid Construction Co., is also involved in new contracts with Aramco and the construction of a new power and desalination plant in Shuqaiq, also in Saudi Arabia. Shayla L. Lazo

Kim Eng, Japan broker form alliance

ATR KIM ENG FINANCIAL CORP. said yesterday that its major shareholder Kim Eng Holdings Ltd., a publicly listed company in Singapore, has signed a strategic alliance agreement with Mitsubishi UFJ Securities Co. Ltd.

Under the deal, Kim Eng and Mitsubishi UFJ Securities will join forces in equity brokerage, asset management and other businesses.

The Japanese brokerage firm is a unit of Japan's biggest bank, Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group Inc.

With the acquisition of the agreement, and to further signify its commitment to the partnership, Mitsubishi UFJ Securities announced through the Singapore stock exchange that it would acquire an additional 61.56 million Kim Eng shares through a tender offer to increase its ownership percentage in the company.

The tender offer price is set at ₱2.70.

As of Feb. 25, Mitsubishi UFJ Securities already owned 35.76 million shares in Kim Eng. After the offer is completed, Mitsubishi will own a total of 97.33 million shares or 11.63 percent of Kim Eng's outstanding shares. Dharel C. Gozon

Pharma industry expected to grow 7% by 2012

By Bernie W. Dorotheo

THE LOCAL PHARMACEUTICal and healthcare market is expected to grow 7 percent to $3.4 billion in four years with the anticipated passage into law of the cheaper medicines bill, according to research firm Research and Markets.

The Dublin-based company said in its Pharmaceutical & Healthcare Report Q1 2007 covering the Philippines, the enacted bill would broaden the market, but would mean lower revenues for multinational drug firms.

A similar study that the firm undertook earlier in 2007 described the prospects of growth in the sector as "spectacular."

That same study valued the domestic market at $2.54 billion as of end-2006.

Still pending in Congress, the cheaper medicines bill would make drugs more affordable by allowing parallel imports as well as reducing the transparency monopoly provided through patents.

The latter may be done through compulsory licensing, which means patent holders must give up their monopoly to making and selling their medicines when public interest demands the immediate provision of adequate supply, such as during an epidemic.

"We believe that this legislation will be approved, to the great benefit of many people on low incomes," Research and Markets said.

"However, as can be expected, this will result in lower revenues for pharmaceutical drug makers," it added. "The market is characterized by an emerging over-the-counter sector as Filipinos increasingly self-medicate."

Further, the study took note of President Macapagal-Arroyo's call on Indian drug makers to submit proposals to supply the Philippines with cheap generic medicines.

"Collaborations with Filipino companies was the preferred arrangement, but we believe that government pur- chases through the Philippine International Trading Corp... may also happen," Research and Market said.

DA urged to invest more in dairy industry

By Amy R. Borja

THE CABINET HAS URGED THE Department of Agriculture to put more money in the dairy industry as dairy imports have risen to as much as $500 million a year, according to Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap.

In light of rising dairy prices, Yap said the DA was looking into the possibility of bringing to within the next some 9,000 carabaos from Brazil and Australia to boost country's milk sufficiency.

According to an industry source, the country does not have enough cattle, carabao and goats to supply the country's dairy requirements.

Of the 10 million livestock in the country, only 10,000 heads are of the dairy type. And of those, only half produce milk.

The source said this was why for every five glasses of milk, only one is produced locally.

The source said it was no longer economical to import dairy products as the price of skimmed milk powder, for instance, is already at $5,000 a metric ton.

The Philippines imports the equivalent of 1.2 billion liters of milk, of which some 90 to 96 million liters are liquid milk.

Local production, meanwhile, contributed only some 13 million liters of fresh milk last year.

The source likewise noted the lack of investments in the sector, as the budget given to the National Dairy Authority, for example, amounts to only P58.952 million a year.

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Petron focuses on petrochem venture

$1.5B in investment eyed

By Abigail L. Ho

AHEAD OF AN IMPENDING industry of a new shareholder, refinery leader Petron Corp. has promised $1.3 billion in investment in a new facility that will allow the company to produce more high-value products and petrochemical feed stocks.

In a briefing yesterday, Petron chair Nicasio Alcantara said the amount would finance the second phase of the company's Petron Fluidized Catalytic Cracker (PetroFCC) unit, which should be on stream by 2014.

Implementation of the project should start a year ahead of the planned April construction-ending of the first unit.

"It will be funded using equity and loan ratings, but no third factor is definite progress yet. However, this has to be done," he said.

PetroFCC will have the capacity to produce 140,000 metric tons of petrochemical propylene. It will also allow Petron to convert more black products—such as industrial fuel oil—into high-value white products such as liquefied petroleum gas, gasoline, diesel and kerosene.

For the long term, Petron's PetroFCC is also expected to boost operating efficiency at its 180,000-barrels-a-day Bataan refinery.

The PetroFCC has a conversion capacity of 39,000 barrels a day.

It is a major component of the oil firm's oil refinery master plan, which also includes the rehabilitation of a 105K unit that will produce aromatics such as benzene and toluene and expand the company's mixed xylene production.

The 105K unit should be completed around the end of the year.

Alcantara said Petron wanted to enhance its refinery because new petrochemicals, as this would help lower the company's margins in the long run.

The company is now waiting for the decision of Philippine National Oil Co., which owns 40 percent of Petron, whether or not to exercise its right of first refusal to the proposed sale of Aramco Overseas Co.'s 40-percent stake in the oil firm to Saudaraco Group company SEA Refinery Holdings for $330 million.

(From left) HONDA CARS Phils. vice president for marketing Jerrel Dorin, Honda Motor Co. president and CEO Akiyo Yoshino Oyama, Honda R&D Co. chief engineer Chikyuki Yokoyo and Honda Cars Phils. president and CEO Hiroyuki Inouye unveil the all-new 8th generation Honda Accord in a ceremony at the Hotel Sofitel. The new Accord features a bigger body shell and revolutionary technologies

Carmen Copper, Napocor ink power supply deal

CARMEN COPPER CORP., A SUBSIDIARY of local firm Atlas Consolidated Mining and Development Corp., has tapped National Power Corp. as its power supplier for the next three years.

In a statement, Napocor said the supply accord signed recently would be ratified in 2011 and would involve 40 megawatts (MW) of power.

The agreement states that the 40 MW that Napocor will supply to CCC's Toledo Copper Mine in Cebu will come from the state firm's excess capacity from the Leyte geothermal power plants of PNOC Energy Development Corp.

Delivery of power will start when National Transmission Corp. completes the capacity upgrade of its Leyte-Cebu submarine cables from the present 350 MW.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, CCC said it was currently rehabilitating its copper mine in Toledo, with rehabilitation now 60-percent complete. —Abigail L. Ho

ABS-CBN supports cap on ad load

ABS-CBN BROADCASTING CORP. ON Friday declared its full support for the Kapisanan ng mga Broadkaster ng Pilipinas' (KBP) call for broadcast networks to strictly abide by the KBP rule limiting the commercial load of programs to 10 minutes per hour.

"The latest safeguards for public from excessive airtime by broadcast organizations in shortening programs to accommodate more airtime for commercial loads," ABS-CBN corporate communications head Bing Osorio said in a statement.

"The cap prevents broadcast stations from flooding the market with excessive commercials. Limiting the number of TV and radio spots lessens the advertising clutter, thereby making the ads more effective," he said. Rina Oyboca-bure

Gov't food safety advocacy backed

THE MANILA ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL Office (Meco) has thrown its support behind the government's food safety program through the ongoing training of local agriculturists and chemists on a pesticide safeguard system, the Rapid Response Assay for Pesticide Residues (RRPR), for fruits and vegetables.

The propagators of RRPR in the Philippines should help ensure that local produce sold in the domestic market is free from pesticide contamination.

The system, which was developed in Taiwan, will also be a valuable tool for exporters of fruits and vegetables, particularly those who cater to country-to-country guidelines on pesticides and other contaminants in agricultural products.

The Department of Agriculture is upgrading its testing facilities nationwide, to enhance regulations and step up campaign against hazardous chemicals in agricultural products.

At present, assessment for pesticide contamination takes longer periods. The time is addressed by RRPR as it can determine pesticide contamination on site, in a matter of minutes.

The Bureau of Plant Industry-Laboratory Services Division (BPI-LSD) of the DA held the RRPR training seminar in Capitan de On City on March 8 to 7. It was sponsored by the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Products Standard (BAFPS) in coordination with the Council of Agriculture of Taiwan, represented by Ching-Hua Roc-and Chin-Lin Tseng, both of the Pesticide Research Laboratory Taiwan Agricultural Research Institute (TARI).

Another P1/liter fuel price hike seen

MOTORISTS CAN EXPECT FUEL prices to increase by another P1 to P1.20 a liter this month, as oil firms seek to recover losses brought about by the surge in world oil prices over the past several weeks.

The industry source said that based on the increase in the regional benchmark Dubai crude from February to March, oil companies will needed to recoup more than P2 a liter from the pump.

With pump prices already increasing P1 a liter over the past two weeks, the source said motorists will pay more should be recovered within the month.

And this will depends on how world oil prices will behave in the next several days, the source said.

According to data from the Department of Energy, the Dubai crude average jumped to $96.32 a barrel as of March 14 from $80.02 a barrel last month.

The price of unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for refined petroleum products soared to $110.46 a barrel in the first 14 days of March from the February average of $100.07 a barrel.

MOPS-based diesel likewise skyrocketed to $105.21 a barrel in the March 1-14 period from $1.33.32 a barrel the month before.

With international prices continuing to escalate, the DOE yesterday signed the certification to reduce the tariff on the importation of crude and petroleum products from 2 percent this month to 1 percent effective April 1.

Under the implementing guidelines of a Memorandum order on the tariff cut, the tariff on crude and diluent would go down by 1 percentage point increments when certain Dubai crude and MOPS diesel price trigger points are met.

But the tariff to go down to 2 percent from the regular 3 percent, Dubai crude should hit $90.01 a barrel and MOPS-based diesel $105 a barrel.

The tariff would be further reduced to 1 percent at $92 a barrel for Dubai crude and $110 a barrel for MOPS-based diesel, and then would be scrapped altogether at $105 a barrel for Dubai crude and $131 a barrel for MOPS-based diesel.

Tax amnesty deadline should be May 6, says audit firm

By Michelle F. Barro

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO has been asked to authorize the continued implementation of the Tax Amnesty Law for two more months, as many interested taxpayers failed to avail of the March 5 deadline set by the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

Auditing firm Isla Lipana & Co. said many of its corporate clients were hoping to apply for tax amnesty but it was too late.

Tommy Lipana, chair and senior partner of the auditing firm, said taxpayers will want to avail of the benefits of the tax amnesty law but it is now too late.

He said the legislature already brought to the President the concerns of taxpayers wanting to apply for tax amnesty.

Lipana said the auditing firm had asked the BIR to issue a revenue memorandum circular (RMC) clarifying that the supposed deadline for tax amnesty was May 6. He said the BIR promised to issue the RMC last week, but has not yet done so until now.

Should the BIR fail to issue the RMC, Lipana said, corporate taxpayers were hoping the President would authorize the BIR to implement the Tax Amnesty law until May 6.

Under the Tax Amnesty law, individuals and companies that have deficiency tax payments in 2005 and earlier years may get pardon by paying only a measly one-amnesty fee and submitting required documents.

Amnesty applicants must notify their previous income tax returns and under-declared financial statements, and should submit a statement of assets, liabilities and net worth (SALN).

The SALNs will help the BIR update its taxpayers database so that it may improve its auditing skills and tax collection efficiency in the future.

Stocks tumble on worsening ...

From page B1

re than in regional counterparts.

Claudio said that the main fear driving investors to dump their stocks was the uncertainty as to whether major banks around the world would reveal more losses in the coming weeks.

He pointed to the price that JP Morgan Chase would pay for Bear Stearns in the US Federal Reserve-brokered bailout as having been judged as "too low" by analysts—a sign that the buyer was expecting to uncover more subprime losses once it acquires its target.

Trading in the broader all-share index also lost 57.92 points or 3.3 percent to 1,726.52. Market breadth remained bearish with losers beating advancers: 118 to 3, while 26 stocks ended unchanged.

Market activity was slightly lower than in previous weeks with only P2.1 billion worth of shares changing hands, indicating that some investors were treating the selldown, possibly due to the Holy Week break.

Online broker AB Capital Securities said the local stock market would likely follow developments abroad in the coming sessions.

"A more aggressive monetary policy action from the US Fed this week is possible to ease liquidity tensions," it said in a note to clients, referring to the scheduled meeting of the Federal Open Market Committee today.

"[The] long- to medium-term picture looks bearish with the current credit crisis showing no end in sight," AB Capital Securities said, adding that "more stock sell will be announced later this week."

Globetrade's Claudio said that many local blue chips were already trading at attractive valuations, in terms of book value for property stocks and in terms of price-earnings ratios for other counters, but said that the market continued to price in steep discounts due to the deepening macro risks.

"Whether US already time to buy depends on the overall sentiment," he said.

BOP surplus ...

From page B1

outlook from Moody's Investor Service to tap the global bond market in February, expanding the proceeds with the BSP. The Philippines raised $500 million from the re-opening of bonds maturing on 2032.

The strong external payments surplus is February reflected the rise in the country's gross international reserves (GIR) to a new high of $36.1 billion as of end-February, up by $1.3 billion from a month ago.

The GIR—a key indicator of a country's ability to cover the foreign exchange requirements of its economy and counties of the central bank's gross foreign currency holdings, gold reserves, foreign investments and special drawing rights from the International Monetary Fund.—stood at $34.8 billion as of end-January.

"The country report released by the BSP found yesterday, the BSP was commended for managing foreign inflows well while keeping inflation under control.

"They highlighted, in particular, the successful smoothing of peso fluctuations while taking a strategic opportunity to build reserves," the BSP boasted said.

Gov't rejects ...

From page B1

ahead as they don't want to take risks," Finance Undersecretary and Acting National Treasurer Roberto Tan said in a briefing.

"Yesterday's rejection of bids added to the list of failed biddings since February 2, the government has been refusing bids for government securities as the investor rates sought by the market were "absurdly" high.

The Treasury said the government would not give higher rates since its fiscal position was improving. The government recently reported that it posted a budget deficit of only P9.4 billion in 2007, way below the ceiling of P62 billion set under the fiscal program.

Tan said investors in earnest were expected to be seeking at the sidelines before making any investment move. The break in observance of the Lenten Season made it impractical for some to buy treasury bills at this time.

The failed bidding yesterday was despite recent moves of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to cheer investors by cutting its special deposits account (SDA) for short-term instruments. The BSP said last week it would now accept long-term investments in the SDA.

BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS
Makati City, Metro Manila

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS
April 1, 2010

To The Stockholders:

Pursuant to Article II of the Amended By-Laws of the Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI), notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of BPI will be held at the Cinema Ballroom, Intercontinental, Makati City, Metro Manila, on April 01, 2010, Thursday, at 9:00 A.M. for the transaction of the following business:

1. Calling of Meeting to Order
2. Certification of Notice
3. Determination and Declaration of Quorum
4. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Stockholders on March 26, 2009
5. Reading of Annual Report and approval of the Bank's Statement of Condition as of December 31, 2009 incorporated in the Annual Report
6. Approval and confirmation of all acts during the past year of the Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and all other Board and Management Committees and Officers of BPI
7. Election of 15 Members of the Board of Directors
8. Election of External Auditors and Fixing their Remuneration
9. Amendment of Article VII of the Bank's Articles of Incorporation to increase the Bank's Authorized Capital Stock
10. Declaration of Stock Dividend
11. Directors' Bonus
12. Other Matters

In accordance with Article VII of the said By-Laws, the Stock and Transfer Book of BPI will be closed from March 24, 2010 to April 01, 2010. Only Stockholders of record as of March 01, 2010 will be entitled to notice and to vote at the said Meeting.

If it will be inconvenient for you to attend the meeting, you may at your option, appoint another person to represent you thereat by means of a proxy, which should be submitted to the Office of the Corporate Secretary of BPI, 14th Floor, BPI Building, Ayala Avenue corner Paseo de Roxas, Makati City, Metro Manila, not later than 9:00 A.M. of March 26, 2010. Validation of proxies shall be held at the same office on March 27, 2010 at 9:00 A.M.

Either signing an attorney-in-fact, nominee, administrator, guardian, or in any other representative capacity, please spell out fully your title and the papers showing your authority.

FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(Sgd.) CARLOS B. MADRIGAL
Corporate Secretary

BUSINESS

ADB mulls over $500-M loan for RP gov't

THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB) is mulling $500 million to the Philippines to provide budgetary support for projects intended to boost the economy and improve delivery of services.

Last year, the ADB approved the $250-million Development Policy Loan for the Philippines. The DPL is not tied to any specific project or program, but will provide support to the government's overall budget. It will be the government that will decide on the projects to be financed by the DPL.

Jesumin Ahmed, ADB's director for governance, finance and trade division for Southeast Asia, told reporters that the multilateral lending agency is keen on extending to the Philippines $500 million in DPL. He said the ADB plans to approve the first $250 million this year and the other half in 2009.

"Hopefully by June, [ADB] would have made firm agreements with the government for the first $250 million [and]," Ahmed told reporters yesterday following the signing of a joint agreement between the government and the ADB held at the Department of Finance.

Once approved, the $250-million loan from the ADB this year will form part of the government's $2 billion in foreign borrowing program for this year. Michelle V. Rivera

RP urged to tighten grip on infra work

IMF says country well on track to meet economic targets

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY Fund is urging the Philippine government to tighten its grip on guarantees it grants to private firms undertaking public infrastructure projects, hoping that the country will be able to sustain its fiscal momentum.

In the country assessment the IMF executive board yesterday issued in Washington, DC, the fund also affirmed its forecasts on the Philippine domestic economy expecting it to grow by 6 percent while inflation is kept at 4.4 percent this year, despite a less favorable external environment marked by a slowdown in the global economy and rising oil and food prices.

While it commended the country's "impressive" economic performance last year, the IMF board also encouraged the government to strengthen the country's tax effort and place priority spending on a "sustainable footing."

Tax effort refers to net revenues as a ratio of gross domestic product (GDP).

"[IMF] directors noted that public-private partnerships (PPPs) can be useful, but require close monitoring," the fund said in its report, which came in the wake of a Philippine female predator-the former-named national broadband project that, in turn, triggered a review of many other infrastructure projects in the government's pipeline.

PPPs are implemented using the build-operate-transfer framework. In some cases, the projects are funded by the international donor community.

The IMF board has singled out projects funded by private investors and which are guaranteed by the government.

"PPPs present opportunities as well as challenges," IMF country representative Ron Hugo said in an e-mail he sent to the Inquirer. "The opportunity comes from being able to mobilize private capital to serve infrastructure and other spending needs.

"At the same time one of the challenges for the authorities of any country pursuing PPPs is to be able to ascertain, monitor, and control any fiscal risks or contingent liabilities associated with the PPP such as issuance of government guarantees."

Setting up a unit in the Department of Finance to take charge of monitoring and approving all outstanding guarantees associated with public-private partnerships, the IMF executive said, would help the authorities control such risks and get the most out of PPPs.

In addition to administrative reforms needed to sustain the government's fiscal consolidation, the IMF believes that new legislation would be needed to restore the tax base by rationalizing fiscal incentives offered to priority industries and adjusting excise taxes slapped on "sin products," like alcohol and cigarettes.

Meanwhile, the IMF's projected GDP growth for this year was weaker than the 7.3 percent expansion posted last year, and below the 6.3 to 7 percent range targeted by the government for 2008, given a sharp slowdown in the United States economy. However, the inflation forecast was in line with the government's target range of 2 to 4 percent, despite the spiraling of global oil and food prices.

Against this background, the IMF urged the government to "address the remaining challenges and vulnerabilities, including infrastructure bottlenecks, social needs, and further strengthen the financial sector, which would help the Philippines weather the ongoing global financial turmoil."

DA seeks int'l aid for vital agri projects

By Amy R. Remo

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY ARTHUR C. Yap has urged the Philippines' international development partners to assist the local agriculture sector in tapping commercial banks' excess liquidity and formalize the funds into the farm sector.

In a dinner forum held last week, Yap told guests that while the country's financial system has been awash in cash, that it can readily use for lending to agriculture borrowers, the farm sector is expected to have only tapped a "measly" 5 percent.

"We need the advice and experience of our global partners on how we can harness this excess liquidity and channel them to agriculture," Yap said. "The area of agricultural microfinance needs the most in terms of assistance from our donors."

Last week, the Department of Agriculture invited foreign diplomats and representatives of the World Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Korea International Cooperation Agency, Asian Development Bank and other agencies.

Yap gave the guests an account of the country's agriculture environment.

According to Yap, the Philippines' development partners can assist the DA in identifying strategies to accelerate the development of agricultural microfinance, which, in turn, will help ease the rural credit squeeze in the countryside and sustain the growth momentum of agriculture and fisheries sector.

Finance officials consider resetting budget program for 2008

By Michelle V. Rivera

FINANCE SECRETARY MARGARITO Teves said that the government is reconsidering its plan to balance the budget this year in response to mounting pressures for higher public spending.

Teves agreed that the government needs to increase spending for infrastructure and social services to shield the domestic economy from effects of a slowdown in the United States economy.

"Yes, we are thinking about it," the finance chief said when reporters asked if the government would delay the attainment of a balanced budget, which was expected this year.

Still, the government's official fiscal target for the year is to post a balanced budget. The goal of a balanced budget is attached in an effort to improve the credit image of the Philippine government, which has been recording deficits since 1998.

Economic managers are expected to announce changes in fiscal targets, if any, after the conduct of discussions on the government's short- and long-term economic targets.

Some analysts have expressed doubts on the ability of the government to post a zero deficit this year, as tax collecting agencies earlier complained about their "unrealistic" revenue targets.

The prevalence of sticking to a balanced budget this year was also questioned by critics, who cited volatile external environment forces which would leave the government to spend more to keep the economy afloat.

Economists said the 23 is headed for a slowdown, if not a recession, this year, given the worsening state of its subprime market. Several financial institutions have recently reported liquidity problems due to their exposures to the subprime market, which consists of high-risk borrowers of housing loans.

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LIFESTYLE

Editor Thelma Simon San Juan

Also feedback: inquirer.lifestyle@yahoo.com; 2337 (Globe) and 200 (Smart) or email us at allDailyInfo@inquirer.com.ph

This season's must-have accessories are a FREE Kenneth Cole Reaction Wallet and Key Fob with a new HSBC credit card. Apply now. Call 1631 88-800

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Running is today's 'it' sport

Cayetano, who started the Pinay in Action marathon race, explains the phenomenon

By Leisa R. Carpo

THE NEWEST FITness trend on his Manila has ladies no longer 'doing lunch.' They are instead doing brunch—that is, after they finish running that 10K morning race.

The runs and distances may vary, from the brand fitness of races—the 42-km marathon—to the relatively shorter but no less challenging 5-km race. Competitors—Mills, Nine Shakers, Nike, Adidas and even Condura—have gotten Filipinos moving.

Why the popularity? Does it have anything to do with the return of the waistline or the eternally rising hemlines? Diet fatigue, perhaps, or better running shoe technology? Or can we just blame it on those cute fit-for-Pod shoulder?

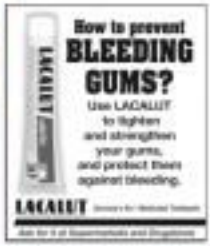
Sen. Pia Cayetano, who started the Pinay in Action marathon race three years ago, is an avid triathlete/runner herself. The race is run on Women's Day every March.

Her career highlights include the Ironman 70.3 Subic marathon in 2006, with a best time of 4:38.

Then the Venice marathon, also in 2006, two weeks before NY Marathon. She also joined Ironman Western Australia in 2005, the San Francisco Marathon in 2002, and the Bell Marathon in 1997. Her best 10K marathon time is 48:40.

Pinay in Action's main objective, meanwhile, is to uplift the lives of Filipinas by providing voices, tools and information for pursuing healthier lifestyles. Activities include all-women sports events, fitness clinics, health-related talks and seminars on women's health, and—believe it—against women and breastfeeding.

SEN. PIA CAYETANO (right) is an avid triathlete/runner herself.



Raising awareness

Sen. Cayetano on the rising phenomenon:

How and when did Pinay In Action start? What specific actions have you lined up for this year? What's your next activity?

Every March, our celebrate Women's March with the Pinay In Action race walk event. The only all-women's run/walk event in the country. It aims to raise awareness about the need for women to lead healthy lifestyles. We have been doing running and empowerment.

RUNNING C4

Pia Cayetano's tips for new runners

1. DON'T RUSH. START with a simple, achievable goal—say, a 20 to 30-minute run.

2. Run-walk to get started.

3. Don't forget to breathe!

Some of my favorite books and online resources:

1. Sole Sisters—the best compilations of inspirational stories on women runners

2. Ultra Marathon Man

3. The Complete Book of Running and Fitness

4. The Complete Book of Running for Women

5. Thepinayaction.com (of course!)

6. Thebellbrunner.com

And my top tips for new steps a good race:

1. Arrive early so you have time to go to the bathroom, do stretching and warm up.

2. Don't ever wear new shoes, or new shirts or new top. Break it in first. Blisters and chapped skin are not fun!

3. Don't join the "mad rush" at the start.

4. Stick to your plan.

5. Smile and enjoy your race.

Q: What's your favorite pre-race meal, and favorite meal to relax the going gets tough?

CONDOMS. Just a piece of whole wheat bread or rye bread (I hate my eyes) and cheese. For long races like triathlons or marathons, I'll have a decent amount and whole wheat bread or pasta.

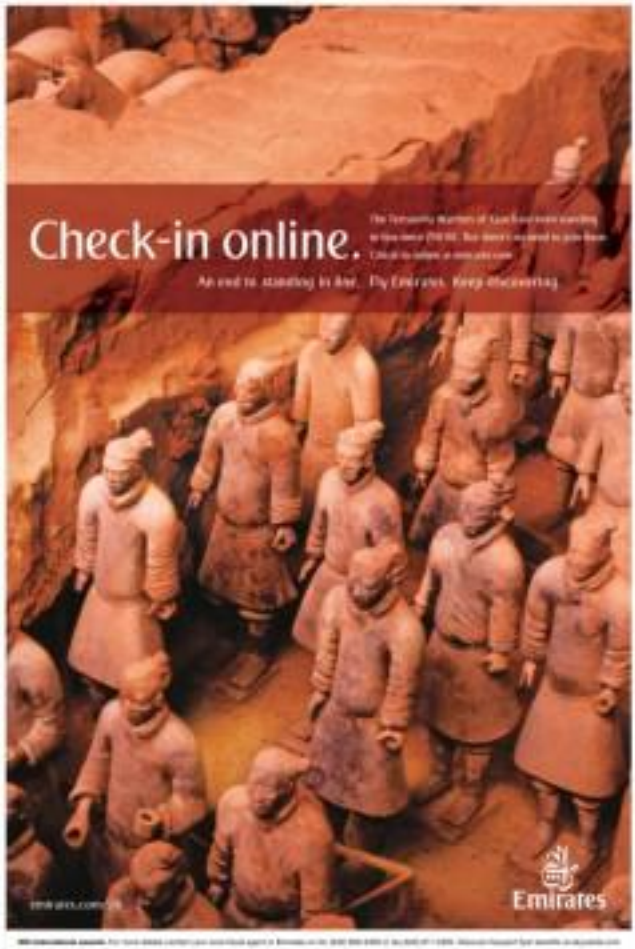
When the going gets tough, I think of George Hwang who trained me almost everyday for the last two years, shouting at me "Mawayo ka na magsiksik." (You can run here!), "Wheels me! Hurry up!," "Hinga! Hinahon! and "More!"

Also I think of Am De Leon, my friend and idol, reminding me to engage my core, stand tall, feel that I have stronger legs and increase my leg speed.

My next race? I just did an Ironman. I'm enjoying my off-season now, not being in "race mode." But I run and race throughout the year. My goal is to maintain a healthy lifestyle, to be stronger, faster, and to improve my endurance. I always join a few Milo half marathons—as many 10K's as I can wake up for, and any triathlon and duathlon that fit my schedule.

Will running continue to gain momentum, or will it fall by the wayside like other fads that have caught the fickle Pinoy's fancy?

Until something new comes along that has the ability to get one's heart racing, promise shorter thighs or speedy meals a shoestring budget, and allow for bonding moments, looks like Filipinos will continue to be on the run, so to speak.



ROWENA, brunette of La Carmela de Boracay Resort Hotel, Jay Dilo of Hey! Jude Hotel and Jessi Nisi Gonzales of D' Mall, D'Boracay

PENSHOPPE representatives Kat Reyes, Sharon Fredelores and Doris Tan

MTOE VJ Sonya Smith and Rose Tenazas-Moir and Bing Tenazas of Boracay Channel brand

Sizzling summer beach volley games

JOEY Quiroz, Mentik VP for marketing, promotions and sports

YODIS Enriquez, Nestea category manager

ELLEN Mesadieu and Jeremiah de Leon of Rivalcoba

ALCHEMY'S Rodolfo Pano and MC Perdon, Aramil's Dilon Hinonio, and Pomp's Brian Tio

PBEA Duo's Henry Rodriguez

APLAWA'S Jose Mari Ubiñas

PHILIP Morris promotions supervisors Franco Jorge and Angelo de Vera, Marlboro managing director Chris Nelson, and Marlboro brand manager Eric Canenberg

With the hot and humid weather, what readily comes to mind is a cool refreshing drink like Sprite, right, palanggas? Well, like in the past summers, Nestea organizes Beach 2008, a grand and fun event, palanggas.

In a lunch presentation, we were informed that competitive beach volley matches from the local intelligent level as well as tons of cool bashes, a VJ search contest and the most important to my book, the beach cleanup activities in Coral Garden Marine Park in Island Garden City of Samal and Boracay will be part of the affair. I can't imagine how some people don't even know how to dispose their trash properly.

"Nestea will adopt one beach each year as part of its beach cleanup effort. We hope to create a positive impact on the environment...but also on the lives of people living around these areas. It is our small way of giving something back in the beach, a place where Nestea has always enjoyed much success," said Tina Samaco, a proud environmentalist, dahlings.

Responsible for the get-togeth-er were Nestle ABP and Nestea consumer marketing manager Jo-sephine Tina Samaco, Nestle fun 98 for marketing promotions and events Joey Quiroño. Nestea brand events specialist Ronald Chuaculoing; Nestea category manager Rudi Tabiquez and Nestle Professionals customer marketing manager Neal Bahon, dahlings. The other participants were Island Cove Hotel and Leisure Park, Splendo, Havaianas, Bendeppe, Milton, the yummy Bacolod Chicken Inasal, Le Soleil de Boracay Hotel, Crystal Sand Beach Resort, La Carmela de Boracay Resort Hotel, Tagaytay Beach Volley Dome at Rizal Park, University of St. La Salle Bacolod City D' Mall, D' Boracay and the swinging Hey! Jude Resort Hotel.

It's so Nestea to give to an awesome, memorable summer each year, dahlings.

A glass of iced tea, anyone?

The great M.Scape

Without batting an eyelash, palanggas, an F1 lifestyle event called M.Scape was recently held at a breathtaking resort locations, dahlings.

Philip Morris Philippines Manufacturing Inc. managing director, the popular Chris Nelson explains, "M.Scape encapsulates and heightens the experience of being in a five-star-class race, which we have supported for years, and will continue to do so."

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Haagen using FKL Photo Solutions

Marlboro brought together the movers and shakers of the country's nightlife for this prestigious event like Eugene Elton Tio of Pomp, King of the Nightlife Louie Yatsmal of Mave, Agilay's Jeffrey Elser Uytengsu, Oliver Mendoza of swinging Club 69 crowd and Benny Rodriguez of Pete Geo, dahlings.

The four-day trip took the lucky invitees in the Jiangsu Chinese Grand Prix Shanghai racetrack in Shanghai, China, the home of Formula 1 action. The group was treated to a party at the Peninsula Club's exclusive M.Scape Lounge, located on top of the Cenderia Street Marlboro Race Team pit area.

Giving credit where credit is due, dahlings, Louie Y. said, "Marlboro did a fab job, first class all the way."

Leave it to the luminous M.Scape to bring us to a perfect location, watching Ferrari and Marlboro in action, dahlings.

1st international wind-surf camp

Imagine yourself flying over a cool ocean—gliding you the perfect vantage point to appreciate the to-die-for view of a beach.

Well, palanggas, this is what you call kite-boarding. It's a sport which gives you the same adrenalin rush you get from windsurfing.

Latest is in the renowned Pilla which sponsored this first-ever International Wind-Kite Surf Sport Camp at Bulabog Beach in Boracay, for a five-day, an awesome congregation of awesome competitors, age 14-40, around the surf and windy, dahlings. Hi-tri hot-hot stars were Cris Alber, her sister Ana Rilong, Irene Ramos and Donna Garcia represented the Philippine group—bright, active, with a splash of attention," Cris A. explained.

Looking real dump in her Pilla gear, vivacious Cynthia Carrion, assistant secretary of Tourism for Sport and Wellness, was present to help promote this event, palanggas. It was her first dive at kite-boarding. "Thanks to our strong monsoon winds, Boracay is a prime destination for kite-boarding and other surfing disciplines," she said.

Here come the Russians, dahlings. All looking fab in their colorful Pilla outfits, a group of Russian kite-boarders that included Andy Khitrovo, Russian windsurfing champion and photographer, and Mikhail "Misha" Voinescul, host of surf-and-sports TV show "the Voinescul" and the popular Russian News Service. Apart experiencing the thrill of this sport, they vowed to promote Boracay and the sport in their countrymen.

It's so Pilla, dahlings, to keep on riding high on a wave of style and performance.

MALU Nuñez of Speedo, Nestea brand events specialist Ronald Chuaculoing, Nestle ABP and Nestea consumer marketing manager, the workaholic Tina Samaco, and Edelyn Tarilla of Speedo

JERRY Concebello of Le Soleil de Boracay Hotel

NEMETTE Sirol, owner of Graveyard Restaurant Center, meets Carrion.

CYNTHIA Carrion, assistant secretary of Tourism for Sport and Wellness

KEN PAUL Tarnacon, host of extreme sports TV show

LARGE group of Russians, including kite-boarders, wind-surfers and journalists

YUDA'S Derrick Ostenglion (standing) with NMOS winners Lester Kong and Allan Bedonia

NUVO'S main man Louie Yanart and Ferrari driver Felipe Massa

PHILIP Morris national key accounts manager Willy Sebastian and MMR winner Allan Bedonia

AWESOME Marlboro Ferrari in Shanghai

SHEENA de la Cruz with Cris Abad Santos-Albert and Irene Ramos

How to stop mindless eating

By Mitch Felipe
Contributor

ELLEEN lost 40 lb in less than a year. She focused on rearranging her environment and became more conscious of her eating behavior.

ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL weight losers I've known of since I started doing weight management counseling in Ellenes, a decade. She lost 40 lb from August 2006 to June 2007 with the help of Mr. Metabora, her weight loss coach.

She focused on restructuring her environment, did not deprive herself of food, applied small changes for bigger results, and became more conscious of her eating behavior.

Here are some of Ellenes's tips that made her lose weight and maintain the loss even after a year:

■ I decided to go to my favorite coffee shop in the morning instead of doing it late in the afternoon. This took me away from the pantries. I discovered that the display shelves of the breakfast choices early in the morning, like whole grain breads.

■ When I sense the munchies, I just eat a small piece of dark chocolate or berries, fruits. It pays to always have a healthy snack food like pretzels bars or crackers.

■ It's not only what you eat that you must plan, but also how much calories you need to burn everyday. Write what you are eating and doing, then note small changes.

■ Whatever program you choose, it should lead you to a lifestyle change. Ask yourself if you can live through life doing it. Then and only then will it work. I have tried many diets before, which did not work.

Mindful eating plan

Ellenes's weight loss synergy is somewhat similar to Brian Wansink's mindful eating plan. A psychologist, he's author of the book "Mindless Eating".

According to Wansink, the three main reasons why dieting plans don't work are: 1) Our body fights against them; 2) Our brains fights against them; 3) Our day-to-day environment fights against them.

Professor Wansink's eating plan is based on psychological principles rather than conditional diets by doctors and nutritionists. It relies a flexible approach since there are no special foods required and the plan is environment. The purpose is not to deprive oneself of favorite foods while applying portion control so that weight stays off.

The mindless eating plan provides tips on how you can re-engineer your environment. According to Wansink, it's easier to change our environment than to change our mind.

Personalize your eating approach

Wansink gives an individualized eating approach after recognizing one's diet danger zone... avoid stuffing, mindless grazing, party bingeing, restaurant bolstering and desktop dining.

Most studies on fast and are used to eating large servings during mealtimes until they are couldn't stay full. We can limit the need to take and avoid second helpings, especially if you eat at home by eating slowly, leaving something on the plate and using smaller plates. A half plate rule can be applied .... fill half of your plate with vegetables and the other half with a meat or fish and starch (rice, bread or pasta).

Snack grazers constitute frequent eating of snacks like candies, cookies, chips and ice creams most out of a habit than hunger. Stay away from the high-calorie snacks that are not really needed. You can do this by storing them in hard-to-access areas. But the best thing to do is not to buy the snacks and substitute healthier alternatives like fruits, yogurt, cereals or low-fat milk.

Party hangers and restaurant indulgers love to go out with friends and often eat as buffets and social functions. Prepare and apply strategies that will not make you overeat. Have a light snack before the meal. But only what you want and skip the bread and high-calorie foods. Take lots of vegetables and eat slowly.

Desktop diners are busy people who eat at their desk while working to save time. If they go out, they will

ELLEEN, before engaging in weight-management program

Did Jesus also have past lives?

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime F. Licauco

THE CATHOLIC RELIGION, TO WHICH majority of Filipinos belong, has always emphasized the divinity or divine origin of Jesus Christ. "Jesus is our Lord and our God," intone the faithful. And every Christian evangelist of every denomination has been harping on that same message since the time of Paul, the Apostle.

The divinity and godhood of Jesus has become an unwitting ingredient in our collective psyche that we often forget and sometimes even comes as a shock to some of us, that Catholic dogma also says that he is truly man at the same time.

God cannot die, but as man, Jesus suffered and died. This is what Holy Week is all about, the remembrance of Jesus' suffering and passion. It is only at this time of the year in fact during the Last Supper that Communion remembers the humanness of Jesus.

And as a true human being, he must have also grown hungry and ate like any other man. And like other human beings, he must have also urinated and moved his bowels. What's wrong with that? Nothing! It's just that we never think of Jesus as as one human.

As a man, he must have fallen in love also. And there is sufficient evidence, particularly in the Nag Hammadi texts, which were discovered in 1945 in Nag Hammadi, Upper Egypt, that he had some romantic relationships with Mary Magdalene. Some architect even gave the extreme of asserting that the two got married and produced a child. But there is no evidence for this theory.

Reincarnation

Now, the next question is, if Jesus were truly man, did he also undergo a series of reincarnations like we do?

Yes, according to the American psychic and prophet, Edgar Cayce, who, while in a deep trance, revealed that Jesus had undergone some 30 previous incarnations before becoming the Christ.

It is a revelation that the reader Cayce would not accept. Being a very devout Christian lay preacher and Sunday school teacher, he could not believe what he himself had said while in a trance. He considered such a notion as heretical and that's why for was long, agonizing months, he stopped all his house readings until he could figure out and get convinced the message was not coming from the dark side of from the devil himself.

Who did the sleeping Cayce say Jesus was in his past lives? He mentioned only several of them: Jesus first came on earth as Amilius, an incarnation in spirit form only. Then he was Adam, the first physically created man, according to Genesis. Then he was Enoch, a man who "walked with God," according to the Bible. Then he was Melchizedek, a priest and prophet at the time of Abraham. Then he was Joseph, a son of Jacob, who was sold in slavery by his brothers. Then he was Joshua, the successor to Moses who led the Israelites into Promised Land. Then he was Asaph, the chief musician and seer in King David's court. Then he was Zerubbabel, a prince who helped reestablish the worship of God after the Israelites' return from captivity in Babylon. Then he was Josiah, father of the religious leader, Jeremiah. Then he was Jesus, the Christ.

There were also bizarre readings of Cayce which hinted that Hermes, a god of Ancient Egypt, may also have been an early incarnation of Jesus, as well as Buddha, the Enlightened One. Sure these last possibilities were too explicitly identified by Cayce.

Puzzling statements

It's a true that Jesus underwent several previous incarnations, there is can help explain some puzzling statements made by Jesus as mentioned in the Christian Bible.

For example, consider the following passage from John 8:56-58:

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see the day of my coming; he saw it and was glad." Then the Jews said to him, "You are not even 50 years of age and you have seen Abraham!"

"Jesus said to them, 'I am telling you the truth, before Abraham was, I am.'"

Why did he say that before Abraham was even born he was already there?

If what Cayce said were correct, that Jesus was at one time Melchizedek who lived during the time of Abraham, then when Jesus said makes sense. He was indeed already there even before Abraham was born. He must have known his past incarnation as Melchizedek.

I realize that most people in this conservative Christian country do not accept the concept of reincarnation, much less apply it to Jesus Christ. For the word "reincarnation" cannot be found in the Bible. But as Cayce clearly pointed out, "One can read reincarnation in the Bible and another can read it out again."

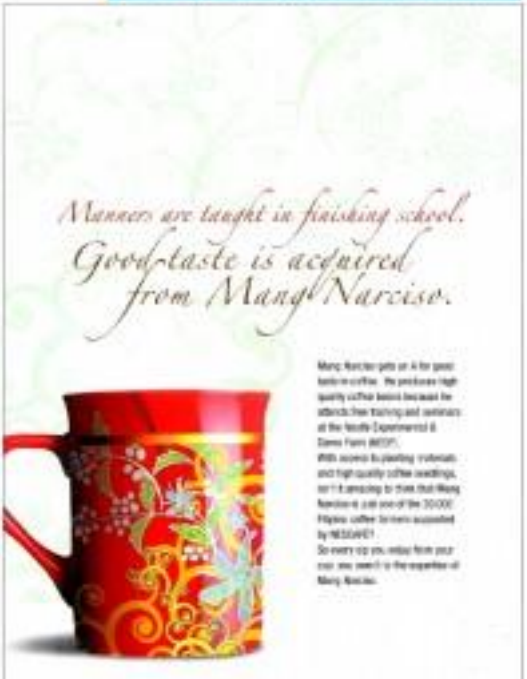
Note: We don't think ESP & Intuition Development Seminar staff to hold April 26 to 27, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. at Rm. 309 Price Plaza 1, 336 Espaqui St., Guadalupe, Makati. Interested parties may call 8357263, 4026886, or fax 8356983. E-mail to: neroaventura_2005@yahoo.com.ph or visit www.jaimefranco.com.

Are you a meal stuffer or a desktop diner?

get foods from vending machines or convenience stores. Bring your own food like a sandwich and a fruit. Remind yourself to drink lots of water and make it readily accessible. Most importantly, keep unhealthy snacks out of sight.

Next Sunday: How to do food trade-offs

E-mail the author at mitchfelipe@gmail.com



Running is today's . . .

From page C1

shines for girls throughout the country the whole year round.

For the first time also, we had an expo that featured key companies focused on women only, such as health, wellness, fitness, beauty, fashion and kids. It was all about advocacies on women's issues, but there were also fun stuff like shopping and just plain having a good time with family and friends.

Another highlight was a photo exhibit on the Magsa Cuna for women, featuring pictures of women who were either enjoying or being deprived of the rights enumerated in the bill that I filed in the Senate. There were also contributions and stories who provided nutritious nourishing.

Is Bir the first all-women's race in the Philippines? How did the idea for this race come about? How difficult is it to organize it?

I often had these talks with Ines De Leon, a good friend and a fabulous cheering-and-qualifier in the Ironman World Champ, about how to galvanize my advocacies on women empowerment, health, sports, etc. One day, we said, "Let's do it! As all girls run. Let's not just keep talking about it but let's provide women with a genuine venue to get fit."

It takes a lot of planning to stage a race. It being an all-girls run, we needed to convince a lot of women in the beginning to try it.

This year, we had three distances to suit different needs: 10k for the more serious/long distance runners; 5k for beginners and 1.5k for kids and families who are just out to have fun.

How do you feel about the rapid popularity of running? Any tips for runners?

Running is just about the easiest sport to get into, so it's about time it became popular. All you need is a good pair of running shoes and a place to run.

(The writer has been running for seven months, and has run in two marathons—Clarkathon 2007 and Pacific 2008. She was her first Pinoy in Action race clocking 4:5 minutes in the 10K and placed 2nd in her age group.)

THE AUTHOR (in pink top) runs with kids in the 11 and below age group.

Finally, shop/resto for coco lovers

INSIDE OUT
Gary Quinlenan

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN all one needed to do was to walk in a garden and pick an herb or harvest vegetables. Today, cheaper and more-produced foods have flooded the market.

Beware

It's called convenience foods. They are processed, tasty and filling. Stop for a moment. Many if not most of these foods contain hydrogenated oils. Relished now in parties with abundant beverages. Certain softdrinks and beverages are loaded with refined sugars and chemicals.

The patient is out

Because of the alarming rate of increase in the incidence of cancer, diabetes and heart disease, the medical community is looking into the many serious side that lifestyle plays in the health of an individual. Just the word patient alone already connotes illness. So, let's not get to be included of becoming a patient. It's time to try a gentle, yet natural way to better health.

Natural life

It's all about embracing what Mother Nature continues to give us—a bountiful harvest of goodness from the earth. And the best gift is the coconut.

A dietary staple in the tropics, the coconut or buko is loved here. Because it grows in abundance in the Philippines, many Filipinos ignore its wondrous benefits. Before World War II, lifestyle diseases that plagued the Western World were unheard of in this country. Then, the tactics that included the use of saturated oil and other unsane ingredients. Sadly, this traditional way of living is dying except for certain regions like Ilocos.

The coconut in staple food is fast losing its popular place on the dining table.

With the entry of the Western diet/foods that have saturated the market, a host of diseases have cropped up.

The coconut contains MCTs—medium chain triglycerides which burn up quickly in the body. It promotes energy and weight loss. Because it is transported directly to the liver where it is converted into energy it increases the rate at which the body burns fat. Thus creating no ketones—diet aid.

As an antibacterial/fungal/microbial, there have been testimonials by patients with herpes (who have not had a breakout for one year after taking three to five tablespoons daily in the morning on an empty stomach).

- Obesity (a lady lost 10 lbs in six weeks by consuming three tablespoons daily mixed with her oatmeal).
- Diabetes (a man's blood sugar stabilized after taking three tablespoons for three weeks).
- Depression (a patient's mood levels improved via two tablespoons daily mixed with juice within one week).

Coconut house

Finally, a home for coconut products/foodies and coco lovers. The Coconut Home is located in Sentosville Village along Sucat-Alabang (metro Manila) guarded by COCOF (Coconut Industry of Philippine Organic Virgin Coconut Oil and Allied Products Manufacturers and Traders), the distributorship and sales center every imaginable coconut product—cosmetics, lotions and ointments and food items such VCO as the star of the store. Good news for diabetics. If white sugar rates 100 percent on the glycemic index, coco sugar is only 35 percent. Thus, it is safe for those with diabetes.

At the resto can be found an ice cream bar whose main attractions are the popular sansrival but still coconut ice cream in ube, corn and regular flavors as well as the slimmed coco milk whose light cream flavor is unbelievably refreshing. It is the best non-dairy milk in the world. You may want to try pancit buko and buko-okoy, its bestsellers. Call 4892360.

Skin luster

Left over grated coconut meat can be scrubbed all over the face and body for a smoother, softer skin. Try it!

Holy Week fast

If you want a healthy start going having regimen, take sea gleat coconut water every hour alternating with purified water. In day's end, drink three tablespoons of VCO.

Affirmation

"I am one with the heart of heaven."

Love and light!

Yoga workshop just for kids

IN A WORLD WHERE KIDS IN elementary are overspent on DVD, parents are London-Australopithecus desperate for ways to make kids pay attention. In answer to this need, Yoga Manila invites 5- to 9-year-old children to Gen. workshop by Children, a yoga workshop just for kids.

Bryana Cabela of Yoga Ed.—a US-based organization focused on helping kids learn through yoga—will lead the workshop on March 29, 9:15-10:15 a.m.

Through breathing and balancing exercises, children will learn skills to improve their ability to focus and pay attention...all in a fun-filled environment.

The workshop will be held at Yoga Manila, Gateway Business Center, 126 Perea St., Legaspi Village, Makati. You 09.17.3228328, e-mail info@yogamanila.com. Reservations would be appreciated but are not required.

ENTERTAINMENT
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INSIDE

■ **Senator Chiz promises to send his devoted fan, Jean Garcia, a shirt** Feedback /D4
■ **Visionary Awards show draws Pinoys, Fil-Ams in Hollywood** Inquirer Exclusive/D1

Shakey's
Bring Home The Bacon!!
Tropical Bacon Pizza
The best smoky, tasty bacon you'll ever have...
DELIVERY HOTLINE 77-777
If it's late, it's FREE!

TOTO can't stop the music. And guess what? They didn't think "Africa" would be such a big hit. They'll be at the Big Dome on April 5.

'The best on the planet'

By Pocholo Concepcion

THE AMERICAN BAND TOTO, IN THE words of Eddie Van Halen, is "collectively the best musicians on the planet."

Its original lineup—Jeff Porcaro (drums), David Hich Boddicker), David Hungate (bass), Steve Lukather (guitar) and Bobby Kimball (vocals)—were top session musicians who had played on albums by Steely Dan, Seals & Crofts, Boz Scaggs, Kenny & Chet, among others.

The band reached its apex in 1982 with the commercial and critical success of "Toto IV," which won six Grammy Awards and had young Filipino fans singing "Africa" and "Rosanna" on their way to school.

Porcaro's death in '92 nearly forced the four to disband, but the surviving members decided to keep playing.

Its last album, 2006's "Falling in Between," was well-received and the band continues to be hugely in demand.

Lukather chats with Inquirer Entertainment, before the band returns for a one-night concert on April 5 at the Araneta Coliseum.

Tell us how you met David Paich and Jeff Porcaro that led to the forming of Toto.

I went to high school with Jeff and (his brother) Steve Porcaro. I consider them my second family and they changed my life for the better. There's no need to describe how much I love them. I met Dave through them, too. I could write a book about our lives together but needless to say, I learned how to make records and be a real musician because of the Porcaros and Paich.

Individually you were all top session musicians. Did it mean the band had an easy time writing and recording songs?

Easy? Well sometimes. But I learned how to write great songs from David Paich. He is a genius and the greatest humble guy ever. So many people copied his style. Ask David Foster. Great guy but he would tell you that Paich inspired him to do what he has done.

THE BEST / D4

Online encyclopedia picks films for Lent

RATHER THAN RENTING Geoffe de Mille's "Ten Commandments" from the video shop all over again, viewers can consider these picks from PINOYflix.org, the free Philippine web-based encyclopedia:

'Himala'

"Himala" is the 1982 landmark film directed by Ishmael Bernal about a small town woman (Nora Aunor) who claims to have seen an apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary and begins exhibiting healing powers. It is also a commentary on Third World poverty and rural customs.

'Magnifico'

"Magnifico" is an independent film that looks at harsh and sad realities through the eyes of a child. The film stars child actor Jiro Manio, Gloria Romero, Lorna Tolentino, Albert Martinez, Isabella De Leon and Dante Rivero.

'Tanging Tarsier'

"Tanging Tarsier" is about faith, love and music within a family. The award-winning drama film directed by Lucrio Cuillen stars Gloria Romero, Johnny Delgado, Cherry Pie Picache, Dina Bonnevie, Joel Torre, Lito Lapid and Hilda Koronel.

'Santa Santita'

Scripted by Jerry Gracio and directed by Lumbo Cadlum, "Santa Santita" chronicles the life of a young modern-day Mary Magdalene (Angelica Panganiban) who finds herself stranded amid the human misery and moral ambiguities of contemporary Quiapo.

'Sister Faustina'

"Divine Mercy In Today St. Sister Faustina" is the true-to-life story of Catholic saint Sister Mary Faustina Kowalska (Juanita Rose), a Polish nun who ran away from home to enter the monastery.

GODIVA Quality skin care need not be expensive!

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Maris Renewal ₱700
ThermaFirma ₱4,500
SilverTherapy ₱4,000
W GlycerActive ₱700

BB PILIPINAS World Jessica Soo Miguel, left, with finalist Tabetha Jo Frith, center, and Bb Pilipinas-Universe Jennifer Barrientos.

Get rid of lines and wrinkles

Sen. Panfilo Lacson fights aging skin with real solutions.

"When I saw myself on TV, I realized wrinkles dramatically changed my appearance. I looked old," he says.

He didn't want to waste time on something that didn't give visible effects. "I made a decision to go to Facial Care FOR MEN. Wala naman akong kyaga sa mga skin-care products, no improvement eh. To me, results matter. I want to see a real, visible improvement. At Facial Care FOR MEN you get results fast. Right after my first **REFIRME™** and **SKIN TONE RE-ENERGIZER** treatments, the 'number 11' wrinkle on my forehead had almost gone. When I compare my old TV interviews with recent ones, the proof that the treatments work is there—I now look five years younger!"

REFIRME™

With also technology, the combination of light and radio frequency, it firms up and tightens sagging skin, eliminating lines and wrinkles in the face and neck. ReFirme™ reduces undereye bags and turkey-neck look. **The result:** virtually wrinkle-free skin.

"ReFirme™" is excellent. After a 45-minute treatment, I already saw significant changes. The deep wrinkles on my forehead had almost disappeared and my skin had become firmer," the senator says.

SKIN TONE RE-ENERGIZER

It utilizes low intensity currents to tone the face and neck muscles. It also eliminates crow's feet and laugh lines. **The result:** reinvigorated younger-looking skin.

"I wanted painless and effective treatments. When Facial Care FOR MEN told me that the Skin Tone Re-energizer is a 'non-surgical face lift,' I agreed to give it a try. I've proven its effects. I definitely look younger than before with my toned skin and with less lines. No pain. No hassles."

Get real results at Facial Care FOR MEN. Call 813-7668 today for a FREE PRIVATE consultation.

Paolo Bediones defends Miss RP-World winner

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Corrigal

SO MUCH HAS been written and said about Bb Pilipinas-World Jessica Soo Miguel's controversial win during the pageant. If there's one person who has the right to speak up, it's pageant host Paolo Bediones who was right beside her when she fumbled. Here's Paolo's unobscured account of the much hollywood incident:

"When I called Jessica Soo Miguel up to the front, I rearmed her up just like the rest with a simple question to reveal more of her personality and hopefully remove any nervousness. I asked if she felt any pressure considering she had just won her bi-national and long gown. She said that she felt no pressure to which I quipped sincerely 'Confident! Please choose a name of a judge!'—the whole audience chuckling to myself not knowing it was her boss.

"Then it began...

"So need for rewarding a face already blemished by a mere stumble has over 300,000 hits by now of that fateful incident that will forever etch Jessica's name in pageant history. The poor kid was lost in her thoughts amidst the thousands of people at the Araneta.

"Was she observing of the

PAOLO / D3

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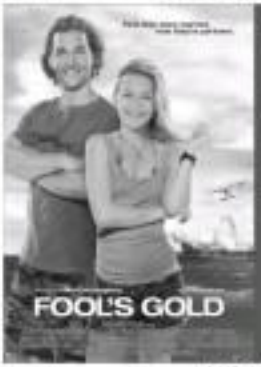
BEOWULF

DEEP SEA (3D)

THE PODIUM

PREMIERE CINEMA
MY BIG LOVE
ATONEMENT
ELIZITH
SENSITIVE'S CUP
RESERVED



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at these SM Cinemas

Regular showing starts
MARCH 22

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CINEMA ACCESS: 635-5555

MOVIEWORLD

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GALLERIA

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6 STEP UP 2
2 MEET the SPARTANS
7 FOOL's GOLD Sneak Preview
3 ATONEMENT
8 IndieSine: WHEN TIMMIA meets DELGADO
4 SUPERFIGHTERS
9 ANG LIHIM ni ANTONIO
5 10,000 BC
10 MY BIG LOVE

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4 MY BIG LOVE
8 SUPERFIGHTERS

NOVALICHES

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2 10,000 BC
4 FOOL's GOLD Sneak Preview

PIONEER

1 STEP UP 2
3 ATONEMENT
2 MEET the SPARTANS
4 FOOL's GOLD Sneak Preview

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SELDA

ONE OF 2007's MOST TALKED ABOUT FILM IS SHOWING AGAIN!

exclusive on INDIESINE Ermita

STA. ROSA

1 10,000 B.C.
2 MEET the SPARTANS
3 MY BIG LOVE
4 THE SPIDERWICK CHRONICLES

LIPA

1 10,000 BC
2 THE BUCKET LIST
3 MY BIG LOVE
4 PJ

DASMARINAS

1 IN THE NAME of the KING
2 UNTRACEABLE
3 10,000 BC
4 FOOL's GOLD Sneak Preview

IMUS

1 10,000 BC
2 MY BROTHER'S WIFE
3 MEET the SPARTANS
4 MY BIG LOVE
5 FOOL's GOLD Sneak Preview

ANGELES

1 10,000 B.C.
2 THE ASSASSINATION of JESSE JAMES
3 THE MIST
4 MY BIG LOVE

TARLAC

1 10,000 B.C.
2 27 DRESSES
3 THE SPIDERWICK CHRONICLES

STARMILLS

1 THE MIST
4 JUNO
2 MY BIG LOVE
5 10,000 BC
3 I-10 TO YUMA
6 THE ASSASSINATION of JESSE JAMES

BACOLOD

1 10,000 B.C.
2 IN THE NAME of the KING
3 THE MIST
4 JUNO
5 MY BIG LOVE
6 IndieSine: SELDA

ILOILO

1 10,000 B.C.
2 THE BUCKET LIST
3 MY BIG LOVE
4 UNTRACEABLE
5 DAN in REAL LIFE
6 PJ

Paolo Bediones defends...

From page B1

PAOLO Bediones

covered? Based on the criteria for judging and the process the GCF implemented, the answer is that questions is an emphatic yes. Beauty of face and figure comprised a total of 80 percent and remember the vote both the long gowns and swimsuit competition which leaves us with 20 percent to be divided evenly between personality and intelligence. So for this pageant, 10 percent for intelligence was all that was allotted."

Huge headstart

"The no stories have badly the story have performed in the Q&A, she wouldn't have had much considering she had a huge headstart in the scores.

"What now for Janina, the candidate who received scrutiny by simply being herself, the candidate who was able to eclipse untoward issues by scoring a few grammatically incorrect phrases and the candidate who took home one of the coveted crowns? While many ridicule her and found her undeserving I have but one thing to say: I admire her for not buckling under the pressure and for being as blissfully honest as possible.

"She wasn't pretending to be anything. Standing beside her, I could feel her sincerity to come up with a satisfactory answer despite the handicap she had in communicating effectively in English."

Feeling sorry

"Did I feel sorry for her? Yes, I did. Do I feel sorry for her now? No. I am so excited to see how God will pull her out of this. She is now experiencing so much persecution that adults many years her senior would have difficulty facing. It's so easy for us to say 'are would have done better given the chance' but do we know for sure? Do we know what it feels like to be in front of thousands, watched by millions watching, provocative album reviews and covers of Sexing Out Sister's "Breakout," Christopher Cross' "Sailing," Kenya Lofton's "Straight" and more plus Julie's own composition "Love is..." Julie fused the singing style of Linda and Shakira to come up with a new musical genre—Latin Chill. Sealed with a Chill and all are in frustration.

Love Day treat

Yuppies from Toledo, SCBC and Ayala FCU are still raving about the unique Friday treat than QFV 11 surprised them with via Dillon Dominant Thirty Cafe Valentine edition. Vin Hilary Isaac, Tess Villar, Steph Hontanosa and more performers popped up at the offices with a special delivery of fashion, food and fun which solidified the bond of the station with its loyal women viewers. Way to go, Q girls!

E-mail: asaringbulo@angelo@yahoo.com.

GREENHILLS CINEMAS

THEATRE MALL

PROMENADE

1 ATONEMENT 2 10,000 B.C.

3 STEP UP 2 4 5 POOLS GOLD

Eastwood City

Grand Easter Egg Hunt

March 23, 2008 • 3:00pm

Enchanted Central Plaza

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

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GUARANTEED SEATS

10,000 B.C.

STEP UP 2

ATONEMENT

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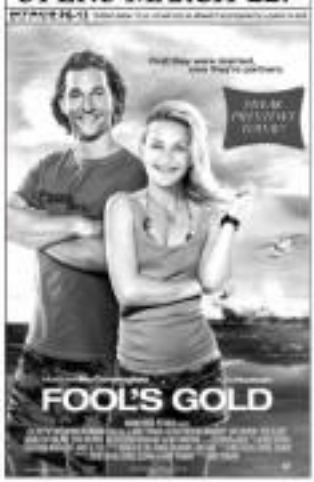

Summer soundtrack

Make Julia Dunnam's "The Love Lounge" (Sony BMG) your official summer soundtrack. The

AT THE CINEMAS

GLORIETTA 1

GLORIETTA 4

GREENBELT 1

GREENBELT 3

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

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MARKET! MARKET!

TRINOMA

1 MEET THE SPARTANS 2 10,000 B.C. 3 STEP UP 2 4 SUPERHEROINES

1 STEP UP 2 2 MY BIG LOVE 3 FLOOD B.C. 4 ACROSS THE UNIVERSE 5 MARRIAGE PONEY 6 MEET THE SPARTANS 7 ATONEMENT

1 10,000 B.C. 2 MEET THE SPARTANS

1 10,000 B.C. 2 MEET THE SPARTANS 3 ACROSS THE UNIVERSE 4 ATONEMENT 5 STEP UP 2

1 MEET THE SPARTANS 2 STEP UP 2 3 10,000 B.C. 4 ATONEMENT 5 MY BIG LOVE

1 10,000 B.C. 2 THE MIST 3 BUCKET LIST 4 BITE NUMBER

1 STEP UP 2 2 SUPERHEROINES 3 MY BIG LOVE 4 10,000 B.C. 5 MEET THE SPARTANS

1 MY BIG LOVE 2 MEET THE SPARTANS 3 10,000 B.C. 4 ATONEMENT 5 MARRIAGE PONEY 6 SUPERHEROINES 7 STEP UP 2

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

Glorietta — Best Grass Exhibit, March 14-16, Glorietta Activity Center

Greenbelt — Grass Filipino | Shared Wisdom Photo Exhibit, March 26 - April 6, Greenbelt 3

Alabang Town Center — Easter Fun at the Town, March 27, Town Plaza

Ayala Center Cebu — Kid-A-Hoots Present, February 15 to March 16

Market! Market! — Easter Event, March 23 | Activity Center

Christian Life — Repository Philippines presents ALTAR SITZ, April 4 to 27, 2008

Ayala Museum — Registration ongoing for Asian Museum Journey for Wednesdays

Tri Noma — 5th SMILE! 2nd Anniversary, Be part of this grand celebration!, March 27, 10 am - 6 pm, Trinoma Activity Center; Grand Jam, A concert treat for our 2008 Graduates, March 28, 4 pm, Trinoma Activity Center

EASTER MEGA TREATS

Indulge on exciting freebies & discounts when you watch at Glorietta 4 & Glorietta 1 cinemas on March 22 & 23, 2008.

KIDDIE DELIGHTS!

- Glitter Tattoo
- Face Painting
- Balloon Twisting
- Animal Ride
- Mascot Parade

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Win your dream shopping experience!

For every P500 purchase at Alabang Town Center, get a chance to win a P10,000 Rustan's Shopping Spree.

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Shop at Rustan's and double your chances of winning!

Glorietta Greenbelt Alabang Town Center Ayala Center Cebu Market! Market! Tri Noma

MMTA MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

Senator Chiz promises Jean Garcia a shirt

Coaching idol

From Ramon Montecillo (montegrant@abanet)

I don't know where to forward this comment, but if you could get this to the right person, please do so. We have a FB fan finder in "American Idol." If any of our top professional singers can fly over there and give her some tutor on song choice, style, etc., that would be greatly appreciated by Filipinos across the world. Thanks.

Broken English

From Rudy Dumpa (modern41@yahoo.com)

When Mr. Filipino-Universe Justine Sue Miguel gave a really demented reply to English in a question asked of her during the pageant, the judges completely disregarded it and made her a winner.

Hooray for Justine! The 17-year-old has drawn quite the media interest following her victory. If I were her adviser, I would have told her to tell everyone that only Filipinos look down and swallow on Filipinos whose English is not good. And that if she spoke broken English in English-speaking countries, we sure will take her to task for it.

All the statements in that pageant are Filipinos, and the venue is the Philippines, so why were the questions being asked in English? Why are beauty pageants in other countries being conducted in their native languages?

In all the international beauty pageants I've seen on TV, if a contestant does not speak English, an interpreter is provided and she answers in her native tongue. Sri se hain when we say our dandera to speak in English when the vast majority of the host politicians see.

For devoted Chiz fan

From Jeanna Bonnet of Team Chiz (mommie_leannie@yahoo.com)

I just read your Jean Garcia article ("Self-proclaimed Star Freak") and set in Team Chiz are delighted to know that she's also a Chiz Zivodoval fan. Or should we say girlfriend "no hindi pa raw alam." (Sister of one members consider Chiz as their imaginary husband.) Our group will be glad to give Ms. Garcia a Chiz shirt. We hope you could help us relay this message to her so that we can find out her shirt size. If she wants to join us, we will also add colleagues/sisters of the senator.

FEEDBACK

Team Chiz started out a volunteer campaign group during the 2007 midterm elections. It has now evolved into a volunteer group committed to evaluating its members for outreach programs. But we will have meeting (This supporters thru-out "forever") like Mr.Garcia.

I hope you could help us. Thank you.

Ad ruling

From Ariel Ganzon (ariel@ganzon@yahoo.com) of San Juan, Metro Manila

The 30 minutes of ads per hour ruling by KBP would be unfair for its member networks. Some networks do not comply with the ruling since the air time of their ads are even longer than the running time of the actual shows. So this ruling to be fair, it should be mandatory for all TV networks.

'The best on the planet'

Pinoy page B4

Did you ever think the "Twin IV" album would become such a big hit? How did that kind of success affect the band members?

We were very motivated in many ourselves and after being in the band for five years, we finally hit our stride. It was a magical time and I cherish the memories. "Twin IV" was a high point in our career for sure!

But how bad was Bobby Kim-ball's drug problem and personal issues that he had to be fired from the band in 1984?

Not a fair question. We were all doing bad drugs back then. But Bobby is a class act and has long left that behind. I wish it had not gone down that way, but would have been a much bigger band world-wide. Drugs are not the answer, but it was the time where everyone was doing it. Like how do knocks. I'm glad Bobby came back. He's one of the great voices in rock history.

Do you consider "Minor" the greatest song Twin has written and why do you think so?

Well, I never thought it would be a hit. It was written at the end of a phase in the record in my life, and I was wrong. Thank God for it. It has been a huge success for decades because people love it.

What was the biggest motivating factor for the band to keep playing after the death of Jeff Burrows?

We had to. I would want the guys to play even if I was gone. It was our way there to be it now, but keeping Jeff's legacy alive is more important. I love him and miss him everyday! We all do. He was a magical presence when he played the drums.

You expressed frustration about the current music scene in the 60s. Can you elaborate?

There is some great stuff out there and a lot of bull...as well. If you want to be a real musician, you have to pay your dues. It's not about fit and having a pretty face.

If we were to put it down, what do you think was Twin's music all about?

Heart, soul, passion and a work ethic like no other. I love the guys and we have saved the best of time. Even though the critics hate us, some of them have turned around, after 30 years they are starting to give us some respect, which is nice. I didn't like everything I heard before, because we are not that type of band ever. Just look at our discography.

FOOL'S GOLD

Sneak Previews on March 19 and 19 (Tue and Wed)

Robinsons MOVIEWORLD

Regular Showing Starts March 20

MTRCB Rating: PG-13

A diarie novela by CARLO J. CAPARAS

To have and to hold

Art ARNELA AVETRIA

A-LIPIN

BY JOLLIMEE

PUGAD BABOY

BY PIT JUNIOR

GARFIELD

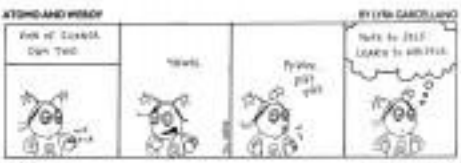
BY JIM DAVIS

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

ATOMO AND WIGGY

BY LYN GARCIA-LAND



GOVERNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHONGUO

EKO MACHINE

BY RYOKO ARISUN

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Cassel

		5				2		
	9		4	5	7		8	
8								9
	6	7				9	1	
			7	4	1			
	4	8				3	2	
9								1
	5		3	9	2		4	
		6				7		

Difficulty Level ★★

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

3	4	1	5	9	8	7	6	2
6	7	9	1	2	3	8	4	5
5	8	2	6	4	7	1	3	9
8	9	3	2	6	1	5	7	4
7	5	4	3	8	9	2	1	6
1	2	6	7	5	4	9	8	3
2	3	5	8	1	6	4	9	7
4	1	7	9	3	2	6	5	8
9	6	8	4	7	5	3	2	1

CHECKING the arcade with wife Jessa Zaragoza and their daughter

First Visionary Awards show draws Filipinos, Fil-Ams in Hollywood

By Jayne Seaver B. Hayudini
Los Angeles Correspondent
Photos by Iskandar B. Hiraldo

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

LOS ANGELES—THE AMBITIOUS TRUST Visionary Awards project by Nielsen Worldwide Media, was held recently at the Kodak Theatre, home of the Oscars. The event was launched with much fanfare at touring Manila-based and Filipino-American celebrities.

Recipients of what was dubbed "Filipino-American Visionary Awards" included Philippine King of Comedy Dolphy, hosting champ Manny Pacquiao and Grammy winner apl.de.ap of Black Eyed Peas.

Also present—as members, presenters, entertainers or invited guests—were Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter Brian McKnight, TV actress-ska Freydez ("Flame," "Walker, Texas Ranger," "North Shore," "The Young and the Restless"), Reggie Lee ("Flames of the Caribbean: At World's End"), Anna Maria Perez de Tagle ("Untold: Montana"), "American Idol" finalist, Jasmine Trias and Jennifer Paz ("Miss Saigon").

VIC Sotto and Pia Guanio

Historic

The event was hyped as a "historic celebration of Filipino and Filipino-American performers in the entertainment industry."

Hosted by singer-actor Raymundo "Bing-dong" Sumaoang and "Kababayan LA" TV host and producer Jinkelle Sa, the show was produced by the new production company, Nielsen Worldwide Media, LLC headed by Raoul G. Goyocados as president and CEO.

According to publicist Ted Boadoc, Nielsen aims to make a difference in the entertainment industry by giving recognition to those who have raised awareness of the Filipino's artistry with their achievements in television, film, music, sports and public service.

On the dot

Four-thirty in the afternoon on the dot, the photographers and cameramen were already lined up outside the Kodak Theatre where the red carpet has been rolled for the celebrities and VIPs.

The two leading Philippine TV networks, GMA-7 and ABS-CBN, were represented, as were several Filipino-American news papers. Some of the early birds were Jasmine Trias, in a black gown with plunging neckline. Also gracing the red carpet were Rudy Fernandez and Isabelle Daza-Fernandez, Senator Ramon Bong Revilla Jr. and wife Lani Mercado, "Eat Bulaga!" host Vhia Ko and Joey with their respective spouses, GMA-7's Mike Enriquez and rapper Francis Magdosong.

Francisco were a necklace with a silver pendant of three suns and a sun which, he explained is to represent his award, represented the Philippine flag.

Also among the Filipinos taken in attendance were actor and martial arts expert Mark Sicat-cocon ("The Crime Syndicate vs. Heaven"), actor Michael Copon ("Miss Bee 4HF") and Fox 11 news anchors Jesse Martinez and Rob de Castro.

MYCHONETTE

Big media hauls

Everything went well, until actors on the red carpet ended. Media people were then herded to the press room, where a big screen TV showed the proceedings. Unfortunately, there was no sound for about 20 minutes.

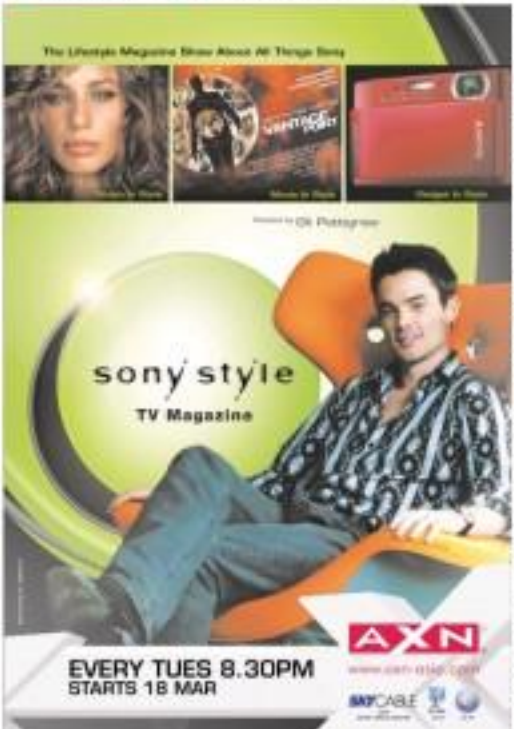
The members of the press had been working since 4 p.m. and were expected to stay until midnight. But there were no food or drinks in the media room, and they were getting hungry, thirsty and annoyed.

Worse, there was no press conference in the room, no one to moderate the Q&A session. There was no microphone, either, and so when an organizer walked in from receiving a trophy, he/she was mobbed in a free-for-all. Reporters were screaming out questions and photographers were yelling for the awardees to turn this way and that.

Plus, not all the awardees were brought to the press room, making the media wonder what they were held up in the meantime.

It might have helped if press kits had been provided, to explain why this or that honoree was being given this or that award. And certainly, the awards committee, or whatever adjusted to recipients, should have been identified.

Clearly, the Visionary Awards organizers should have a new vision of how to handle the media, if they expect to mount a repeat ... sometime.



Clockwise from top: apl.de.ap, Billy Crawford and date, Bong Revilla with Rosa Maria Perez de Tagle, and Cora Sotto